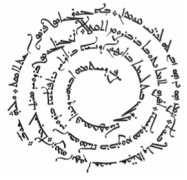
Jacob of Sarug's Homilies on Praise at Table



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46

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Jacob of Sarug's Homilies on Praise at Table

Edited and Translated by

Jeff W. Childers

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For Bill Rankin, with whom I have shared many food adventures

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A few years ago, one title in Bedjan's edition of Jacob of Sarug's homilies caught my eye: "Bees." When I was a child, a swarm of bees settled on a maple tree near my home, the capture of which inaugurated my family into the art of beekeeping. Due to my father's hard work—and no small effort on the part of the bees—one hive quickly multiplied into hundreds of hives that we tended in the agricultural zones of central California. It was my lasting fascination with bees that prompted me to read "Bees." That text drew me into the entire cycle of Jacob's homilies, *On Praise at Table*. It has been a rewarding study, and I am grateful to my father's tutelage in beekeeping and to the bees themselves for the inspiration to produce this work.

I am also grateful to the series editors, and to Sebastian P. Brock, Susan A. Harvey, and Abdul Massih Saadi for their helpful comments and suggestions on portions of this work. Institutional support from the Center for the Study of Ancient Religious Texts at Abilene Christian University has made it possible to complete the work.

Having had several occasions to work with Gorgias Press, I am once again impressed with the professionalism and diligence of the staff, particularly Melonie Schmierer-Lee. It is a privilege to work with them in their efforts to promote greater understanding of the Syriac heritage.

ABBREVIATIONS

Bedjan = Paul Bedjan, ed. *Homiliae Selectae Mar-Jacobi Sarugensis*. Paris-Leipzig: Harrassowitz, 1907; 2d ed. Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2006. Volume 4.

CSCO = Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium

Dolabany, *Catalogue* = Mar Filoksinos Yohanna Dolabany. *Catalogue of Syriac Manuscripts in Za'faran Monastery*. Ed. Mar Gregorius Yohanna Ibrahim. Damascus: Sidawi, 1994.

EDSH = Sebastian P. Brock, Aaron M. Butts, George A. Kiraz, and Lucas van Rompay, ed. *Gorgias Encyclopedic Dictionary of the Syriac Heritage*. Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias, 2011.

Strothmann, *Codex Syriacus Secundus* = Werner Strothmann. *Codex Syriacus Secundus. Bibel-Palimpsest aus dem 6./7. Jh. (Katalog Hiersemann 500/3)*. Göttinger Orientforschungen, I. Reihe: Syriaca; Band 13. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1977.

Vööbus, *Überlieferung I* = Arthur Vööbus. *Handschriftliche Überlieferung der Mēmrē-Dichtung des Ja'qōb von Serūg, I. Sammlungen: Die Handschriften*. CSCO 344; Louvain: 1973.

Vööbus, *Überlieferung II* = Arthur Vööbus. *Handschriftliche Überlieferung der Mēmrē-Dichtung des Ja'qōb von Serūg, II. Sammlungen: Der Bestand*. CSCO 345; Louvain: 1973.

Vööbus, *Überlieferung III* = Arthur Vööbus. *Handschriftliche Überlieferung der Mēmrē-Dichtung des Ja'qōb von Serūg, III. Die zerstreuten Mēmrē: Die Handschriften*. CSCO 421; Louvain: 1980.

Vööbus, *Überlieferung IV* = Arthur Vööbus. *Handschriftliche Überlieferung der Mēmrē-Dichtung des Ja'qōb von Serūg, IV. Die zerstreuten Mēmrē: Der Bestand*. CSCO 422; Louvain: 1980.

INTRODUCTION

INFORMATION ON THIS HOMILY
Homily Title: [Homilies 139–146] Homilies 1–8 on Praise at Table
Source of text: *Homiliae selectae Mar-Jacobi Sarugensis*, edited by Paul Bedjan (Paris-Leipzig: Harrassowitz 1907, 2nd ed. Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2006), vol. 4, pp. 872–914.
Lines: 823/4

BASIC CHARACTER OF THE HOMILIES

In these eight brief homilies Jacob summons his listeners to praise God for his provision of their food and to celebrate their table fellowship. Unlike many of Jacob's homilies, these are neither exegetical-dogmatic in focus, nor do they evoke the liturgical setting of a congregation gathered to observe the Eucharist or other ritual festivals. Rather, these homilies evoke a communal meal setting in the tradition of the ancient Agape, in which Christians have gathered to share a simple meal of ordinary food. The meal observance contains ritual elements, including the preacher's intonation of a brief meditation at the end of the repast, when the diners should be moved to return thanks to God. Yet the homilies are not mere thanksgivings. Through the power of Jacob's vivid imagery, the flavors and aromas of the food and wine—indeed the dining experience itself—are transformed into an extraordinary opportunity for the diners to glimpse powerful unseen realities and to be shaped spiritually as a result, under Jacob's insightful and capable pastoral direction.

Typically transmitted as a cycle bearing the title, *Praise at Table* (*PT*), these homilies offer a glimpse into the efforts of one late antique author to construct distinctly Christian meaning from the experience of communal meal-sharing.

AUTHOR

Jacob of Sarug († ca. 521) was a church leader who worked in the easternmost parts of the Roman Empire during the turbulent years of the late fourth and early fifth centuries. Despite his enormous impact on Syriac preaching and hymnody, we have only sketchy details about his life and career. It is likely that he was born the son of a presbyter in Kurtam, a village on the Euphrates river in Mesopotamia, ca. 451. Although he was probably educated at Edessa, he remained unpersuaded by the dyophysite Christology that dominated the School of the Persians in Edessa before its leadership fled east to fortify the School of Nisibis. However, he was greatly influenced by the exegetical traditions current in Edessa—and by Ephrem the Syrian in particular. Ephrem died long before Jacob's time (373), yet in many ways Jacob is Ephrem's most faithful heir. Strong echoes of Ephrem's theological vision, symbology, and style are evident throughout much of Jacob's writing. Another cycle of brief homilies "On Praise at Table" are attributed to Ephrem, similar to Jacob's homilies presented here.[1]

Along with other Syriac and Greek contemporaries, Jacob adhered to a miaphysite Christology, rejecting Chalcedon. However, he rarely participated in the theological wrangling of his day, devoting his energies to a sort of practical and spiritual theology instead. Credited with composing hundreds of verse homilies in Syriac according to his own distinctive style, the "flute of the Spirit," as Jacob came to be known, left a deep and lasting impression on the Syriac heritage.

Jacob was made chorepiscopus of Ḥawra in the early sixth century, shepherding the rural churches of that region for a number of years. By 519, he had been appointed bishop of Baṭnan, the main city in the district of Serugh, southwest of Edessa (Şanliurfa, Turkey), near the border of modern Syria. Jacob visited churches and monasteries in the towns and villages throughout the area, preaching and exercising pastoral care. Heir to the Syriac tradition of intoning sermons in the form of carefully crafted poetic verse, Jacob contributed substantially to the genre. In a highly creative

[1] Ephrem, *Memre de mensa* 1–11 (see below).

and rhetorically powerful style, he wrote and spoke on many different subjects, drawing themes from the Bible, liturgy, doctrine, and life both ecclesial and monastic. The brief homilies in this volume show us a pastor involved in the lives of Christian communities who uses his skill with scripture, his theological brilliance, and a profound artistry to help them appreciate sacred dimensions of their shared meals in ecclesial contexts.

The authenticity of the homilies "On Praise at Table" is presumed, though no attempt here is made to prove they came directly from Jacob's hand. Yet several factors stand in favor of seeing them as authentic. The homilies employ the meter of 12-syllable couplets for which Jacob is famous, arranged in 4+4+4-syllable phrases. They also follow the basic structure that occurs commonly throughout Jacob's verse homilies, including the introductory request for divine inspiration that is characteristic of him. They manifest the general applicability to a broad audience that also characterizes many of Jacob's homilies. The appearance of certain expressions, images, and motifs in the homilies fits Jacob's usage nicely, such as the Syriac term *remzō* ('signal, wink, nod') referring to the mysterious movement of God's will, the depiction of the divine as a treasury from which the poet (and the diners) make withdrawals, and regular appeals to the 'discerning' listener or reader, frequently in direct discourse. To readers familiar with Jacob's corpus, thematic parallels with other homilies will be evident;[2] for instance, several images in *PT* 6 echo parts of Jacob's homily, *On the Partaking of the Holy Mysteries*. The poet's use of symbolism and the exegete's handling of scripture also fit what we know about Jacob's techniques. Finally, though starting rather late, the manuscript tradition associates these homilies with the name of Jacob; for purposes of the present volume we will do so as well.

[2] Tanios Bou Mansour draws regularly on *PT* in his analysis of Jacob's core theological topics: *La théologie de Jacques de Saroug*, 2 vols. (Bibliothèque de l'université Saint-Esprit 36, 40; Kaslik: L'université Saint-Esprit, 1993–2000).

THE SETTING OF THE HOMILIES

In order to determine the setting of these eight homilies, we will analyze their contents together. On the one hand, we need not presume that they originally had the same function or setting simply because they are grouped together in the manuscript tradition; they may have had diverse contexts of origin and different purposes. However, as we will show in greater detail below, together the homilies fit certain conventions and their contents cohere, justifying their linking in the manuscripts and our treatment of them as a group.

Arthur Vööbus insisted that the homilies in these cycles belong to the *teshbuḥtō*-genre of praise hymn ('glorification, praise'),[3] perhaps due to the use of the expression in their titles, meaning 'praise,' in addition to their opening invocations and repeated expressions of praise. However, these homilies do not resemble the common liturgical pieces discussed by Anton Baumstark, to whom Vööbus refers for backing.[4] The liturgical *teshbuḥtō* is characteristically a more brief and focused prayer, with a simpler meter (e.g. 4+4 4+4),[5] whereas in style, content, and function the pieces translated here fit better the genre of verse homily. Nor do their contents lend themselves well to the liturgical use of the *teshbuḥtō*. Respecting the titles provided in many of the manuscripts, we should say they are *teshbʿḥōthō* ('glorifications') only in a general sense.

Although it is impossible to be specific when describing the original context for these homilies, their contents presume a religious meal setting, but one that is paraliturgical. Nearly all the homilies make explicit reference to the shared meal, often more than

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[3] Vööbus, *Überlieferung* I, 120.

[4] See Anton Baumstark, *Festbrevier und Kirchenjahr der syrischen Jakobiten.* (Studien zur Geschichte und Kultur des Altertums 3/3–5; Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 1910), 130, 145 (and no. 2), 156.

[5] For instance, see S. P. Brock, "Some Early Witnesses to the East Syriac Liturgical Tradition," *Journal of Assyrian Academic Studies* 18 (2004): 9–45.

once.[6] The meal is sacred and somewhat ritualized but not the Eucharist—indeed, the preacher is often at pains to show the relatively inferior value of the (physical) food in comparison to the (spiritual) nourishment of his preaching, a comparison totally unsuitable to eucharistic liturgy. The setting is that of a communal meal rather than the sanctuary in which the church would normally gather to celebrate its regular liturgy. The opening to *PT* 8 (lines 1–8) offers some clues to the original setting of these homilies:

> O you who are seated to dine at this table piled up with nice things,
> attend to this poor man, and hear the teaching brimming with life!
> The lot has fallen to me to be the spiritual cupbearer,
> so take and imbibe the Word of Life, brimming with light!
> I see the cupbearers busying themselves with the (drink) service,
> and love has motivated me to mix spiritual wine.
> Earthly wine, make way for our superior wine,
> from which the wearied soul drinks, forgetting its hurts!

With characteristic vividness, these lines express directly an impression that one gets in many other passages throughout the series: the speaker is addressing a Christian community gathered at table to share a meal. The preacher goes on to say (lines 11–16):

> You arranged the bread, polished the cup, and mixed the wine,
> but the soul has gained no profit from your preparations.
> The body has been satisfied, having gorged itself on delectable things;
> now let the soul take refreshment from the teaching.
> The Head of the House has appointed me over the ministry of the soul:

---

[6] E.g. *PT* 2, lines 1–4, 11–13; *PT* 3, lines 1–6; *PT* 4, lines 1–10; *PT* 5, lines 1–5; *PT* 6, lines 3–6; *PT* 7, lines 3–12; *PT* 8, lines 1–20. Although in most ways *PT* 1, celebrating providence, fits the style and structure of the rest, its references are to God's universal provision more than the specifics of the meal (see lines 9–12, 17, 65–80, 97–100).

> it is famished and complains against me for not having minis-
> tered to it!

The food is ordinary, yet the occasion is religious, consecrated not only for eating together but also to hear a brief word of exhortation that will complement physical food with spiritual nourishment. The exhortation comes mainly in the form of an extended appeal to corporate thanksgiving, typically at the end of the meal. For instance, at the end of *PT* 4, after celebrating the sights, flavors, and aromas of the foods and other delights provided by the Creator, the homilist delivers the following exhortation (lines 95–96):

> Give thanks because you have eaten, give praise because you
> have drunk, and sing hallelujah because you have enjoyed
> it;
> return thanksgiving for this feast brimming over with fine
> things!

Again, in *PT* 5 (lines 55–56, 59–60):

> Tasty fruits have come to us off of the trees;
> let us also give the fruits of praise from our tongues.
> …
> Indeed, the apple with its sweet fragrance will pick a quarrel
> with us,
> if we do not return praise for it once we have eaten it.

The homilies are saturated with such exhortations to thanksgiving, but they offer rich theological instruction as well. The speaker's task is to offer the gathered community spiritual sustenance that will complement their physical provisions, drawing on the details of the setting and on scripture to supply fitting words of exhortation. "We have filled up on bread," he declares at the beginning of *PT* 2 (lines 3–4), "let us mix with it the Word of Life / by which the life of the soul is sustained spiritually." He repeatedly insists that the physical repast should be enriched with spiritual meditation and especially pastoral exhortation, as in the following admonition from *PT* 6 (lines 85–86):

> Season your meal with the pasturage that is in the scriptures,
> for by it the soul feeds and grows fat so that it may live well.

However, his persistent pleas to be heard suggest that not everyone at the table is keen to focus on religious instruction while they eat. Near the opening of *PT* 5 (lines 9–16), the author makes an appeal for Instruction to appear and do its work, despite the mixed reception it is likely to receive alongside the food of the meal:

> Arise, O Instruction, and present yourself at the table,
> and mix your fine wine as well, that it may refresh us!
> Look—the attendants are hurrying to bring in tasty morsels of food;
> you also, bring your sweet flavor to those who love you!
> Some here ravenously hunger for bread and wine,
> but there are others, who discerningly seek you.
> Do not let it irk you, O you who speak amidst unruly people,
> for some are attentive and thirstily crave that you should mix (your wine) for them.

The contents of the homilies are religious but not strictly liturgical; they are filled with moral exhortation but not usually doctrinal. Their function would appear to be paraliturgical, i.e. homilies composed to accompany a ritual meal shared by Christians in a communal context, apart from the Eucharist and the standard liturgy—something akin to a parish meal.

The audience is never specified. Though it is possible the homilies were originally performed in a monastic context, their contents are generic and applicable to nearly any Christian.[7] Furthermore, they provide few if any indicators of distinctly clerical or monastic settings—though it must also be said that they do not exhibit exclusively lay-oriented context clues either. The fact that the wine appears to have been plentiful is one clue that the pre-

[7] Generic applicability is a feature of many of Jacob's homilies, securing their lasting impact but frequently frustrating attempts to define the details of their original contexts. See Susan Ashbrook Harvey, "To Whom Did Jacob Preach?" in G. A. Kiraz, ed., *Jacob of Serugh and His Times. Studies in Sixth-Century Syriac Christianity* (Gorgias Eastern Christian Studies 8; Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias, 2010), 115–131.

sumed audience includes lay people.[8] For instance, *PT* 7 discusses at length the importance of setting limits to one's wine consumption, and table wine appears regularly in the homilies. "He has given you wine—drink a little and give thanks much," he exhorts his audience (*PT* 2, line 63; see also *PT* 3, lines 83–104), before going on to marvel at the process by which wine is made, celebrating its power to transform the heart. Unsurprisingly, the author exhibits some ascetic leanings; this does not in itself indicate a monastic or clerical context. In fact, the asceticizing tendencies of certain passages are moderate, even compromising in places (e.g. *PT* 3, lines 43–54) and far from technical. All these factors suggest a non-monastic setting. The extended warnings against gluttony in *PT* 3 seem ideally suited to a lay setting and would strike a rather odd tone in a monastic context. Overall, the exhortation in these homilies fits a lay audience well—though most of it would not be inappropriate to clerical and monastic audiences too. In other words, the presumed audience is rather general, including lay people, perhaps largely so, as is the case with most of Jacob's homilies.

In the search for Syriac parallels, Jacob's *Praise at Table* homilies resemble a cycle of homilies attributed to Ephrem. These eleven *Memre de mensa* (*MMensa*)—or "Memre on Praise at Table," as they too are generally known in the manuscripts—were edited first by I. E. Rahmani in the early 20th century, then by Louis Mariès and Léon Froman in 1959.[9] In the manuscript tradition they often

[8] For references to eastern monastic allowances regarding wine consumption, see Andreas Merkt, "Reading Paul and Drinking Wine," in Hans-Ulrich Wiedemann, ed., *Asceticism and Exegesis in Early Christianity. The Reception of New Testament Texts in Ancient Ascetic Discourses* (Novum Testamentum et Orbis Antiquis 101; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2013), 70–74.

[9] Louis Mariès, Léon Froman, and François Graffin, "Mimré de Saint Ephrem sur la benediction de la table," *L'Orient* Syrien 4 (1959): 73–109, 163–92, 285–98. The edition includes Latin and French translations. English translation in Mary Hansbury, *Hymns of Saint Ephrem the Syrian* (Fairacres, Oxford: SLG Press, 2006); Italian translation in Ignazio de Francesco, *Efrem il Siro, La Gioia della Mensa. Memre sulla benedizione della*

occur alongside Jacob's *PT* homilies (see below). Pierre Yousif accepted them as authentic, or mostly so, situating their use in the context of a fourth-century fraternal meal in the tradition of the ancient Agape.[10] Apart from their attribution to Ephrem, several features distinguish *MMensa* from Jacob's homilies. Whereas the *PT* homilies have the 12-syllable meter characteristic of Jacob, the meter of *MMensa* fits the 7+7 syllable pattern commonly associated with Ephrem. The length of *MMensa* vary more widely than the *PT* homilies. Furthermore, the poetic style differs in various ways, e.g. the imagery of *PT* tends to be more concrete and direct whereas *MMensa* tend towards the abstract and general. However, *MMensa* share important characteristics with *PT*: they both presume a shared paraliturgical meal setting; they both emphasize themes such as thanksgiving and moderation; they both stress the value of the teaching event accompanying the meal; they both draw moral and theological lessons from the interplay of scripture and the experience of sharing food together. Certain ideas resonate between them, such as the accusation that to withhold thanksgiving after a meal is to imitate the beasts (*PT* 2, lines 5–10, 57–58; *MMensa* 1.A1 [Hansbury 1.2]). Irrespective of whether *MMensa* are authentically the work of Ephrem, it appears that both sets of homilies originally had similar functions.

Yousif proposed some form of Agape meal as the most likely setting for *MMensa*, drawing attention to the clear references to food, the variety of diners in attendance, and the trappings of an ordered religious meal, separate from the main liturgy and distinct from the Eucharist. The early church knew different expressions of the formal fellowship meal that was often designated *agapē*, from the Greek term for "love," i.e. the Love Feast.[11] The occurrence of this fraternal meal was not universal, the practices associated with it

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mensa (Testi dei Padri della Chiesa 57; Magnano: Monastero di Bose, 2002).

[10] Pierre Yousif. "Le repas fraternel ou l'agapé dans les memre sur la table attribués à Saint Ephrem," *Parole de l'Orient* 9 (1979–1980): 51–66.

[11] See texts assembled and interpreted by Everett Ferguson, *Early Christians Speak. Faith and Life in the First Three Centuries* (3d ed; Abilene, Texas: ACU Press, 1999), 125–32.

varied from place to place, and specific information is sketchy, so we cannot speak with great confidence about its development. In its earliest forms it was probably connected to the Eucharist, but by the mid-third century it functioned separately, and an emphasis on fellowship and especially charity came to predominate in its practice. The modicum of extant evidence suggests that where practiced, these fraternal meals occurred in private homes but were presided over by clergy, who oversaw the ritual and helped ensure a measure of decorum. Food and drink were consumed in moderation, fellowship was enjoyed, and the event was concluded with hymns and prayers. The Agape eventually fell out of general use in many places, though in some contexts it survived as a church-sponsored charity meal to benefit the poor.[12]

Not much is known about the development or practice of fraternal meals in the ecclesial contexts of either Ephrem or Jacob of Sarug. Yousif surveys a few pieces of evidence in the Syriac milieu, including the third-century *Didascalia Apostolorum* 9 (2.28).[13] *Didascalia* appears to presume the celebration of Agape meals,[14] proba-

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[12] For general discussion and sources, see Thomas M. Finn, "Agape (Love Feast)," in Everett Ferguson, ed., *Encyclopedia of Early Christianity* (2d ed.; New York: Garland, 1998) 1:24–25; and "Agape," in F. L. Cross and E. A. Livingstone, ed., *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church* (3d ed; Oxford: University Press, 2005), 26–27.

[13] See also the parallel passage in the fifth-century Syriac *Testament of Our Lord* 2.13; further parallels occur in *Apostolic Tradition* 25–27; *Apostolic Constitutions* 2.28. The difficulties associated with interpreting the complex traditions of the ancient church orders are well known (see Paul E. Bradshaw, *The Search for the Origins of Christian Worship. Sources and Methods for the Study of Early Liturgy* [2d ed.; Oxford: University Press, 2002], 73–97).

[14] The Greek original is lost. The Latin version of *Didascalia* uses the transliteration, *agape*; the Syriac has ܢܝܚܬܐ (*nyoḥtō*), an expression meaning "quietness, rest, repose," used as a technical term for meals designated "Agape" in other traditions—for instance, in the Syriac version of 2 Peter 2:13; Jude 13—and for feasts held in commemoration of the dead (see references in Michael Sokoloff, *A Syriac Lexicon* [Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2009], 915). The *Testament of our Lord* uses ܫܘܡܝܬܐ (*ḫshōmithō*; "supper") and ܥܘܪܘܬܐ (*shōruthō*; "banquet, meal").

bly initiated by lay-persons and held in homes, yet the bishop's role remains prominent. The extent to which the instructions in *Didascalia* reflected current and widespread practice is difficult to make out. Yousif also looks to the later Syriac liturgical commentary of Pseudo-George of Arbela, of uncertain date, though perhaps as early as the ninth century.[15] Pseudo-George describes a regular fraternal meal that takes place in private homes, after and apart from the Eucharist, for the purpose of joyful fellowship.[16] On this basis, Yousif concludes that a sort of Agape practice in the Syriac milieu continued centuries after Ephrem's time.

Jacob's homilies do not assign a special name to the meals.[17] Nor do they help us envision the setting beyond what has already been summarized: a communal religious meal of normal food, practiced apart from the main liturgy and involving the laity, but presided over by a member of the clergy, who is expected to invoke thanksgiving and offer edifying instruction at a particular point in the proceedings. Whether we think of these meals as somehow derived from the primitive Agape or not, it is highly plausible that the Syriac church in late antiquity practiced parish meals of some sort, occurring outside the formal ecclesial setting. Such meals would be hosted and largely attended by lay-persons, but would undoubtedly entail the involvement and supervision of the clergy, especially the bishop. They would provide opportunities not only for eating but also for worship and to receive exhortation. One can imagine that a person such as Jacob of Sarug, who was both chorepiscopus and bishop, would have many opportunities to officiate at such meals during the years of his clerical service around Ḥawra and Baṭnan. The form and contents of *PT* (and *MMensa*) seem ideally suited to the sort of fraternal meal setting we

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[15] See S. P. Brock, "Pseudo-Gewargis of Arbela," in *EDSH*, 176. Yousif adopts a twelfth-century date ("Le repas fraternel ou l'agapé," 64–65).

[16] For the text, see R. H. Connolly, ed., *Anonymi auctoris expositio officiorum ecclesiae Georgia Arbelensi vulgo adscripta* (CSCO 72; Louvain, 1913), 91–92.

[17] The term ܫܘܪܘܬܐ (*shōruthō*; "meal, banquet") occurs several times in *PT* (e.g. *PT* 4, line 96; *PT* 5, lines 6-7, 31, 43; *PT* 6, line 85; *PT* 7, line 82).

have been describing. The complex yet meager evidence of the church orders remind us that many practices that must have been very common are difficult to reconstruct precisely according to their early forms, including the Agape, or such occurrences as the bishop's seasonal blessing of first fruits (e.g. see *Testamentum Domini nostri* 2.14, 16; *Apostolic Tradition* 31–32).

Further study of the genre and of Christian religious meal practices in late antiquity may yield more clear indicators as to the original settings of this performative material. But in light of the foregoing considerations, these homilies prompt us to picture a pastor responsible for exercising religious leadership in gatherings of Christian lay persons who have assembled to share food and fellowship in a ritual context, likely in homes, and possibly in the tradition of the ancient Agape.

FORM, CONTENT, AND TERMINOLOGY

As a group, the homilies fit certain basic conventions.[18] They are all rather brief, about the same length: around 100 lines.[19] They each begin with an invitation, either to the Lord for inspiration or to the assembled diners for their attention. They end in brief doxology. They are homilies, rather than just prayers or hymns. Their contents express or call for praise and thanksgiving in response to God's gifts at the table, yet they also challenge the diners in keeping with homiletical exhortation. For instance, in various passages Jacob encourages his listeners to release their anxieties and trust God

[18] The homilies are not perfectly parallel in form and content. E.g. *PT* 1 celebrates God's universal provision in more general ways, whereas the others refer to concrete meal settings; otherwise its structure and apparent function fit the rest. *PT* 6 focuses more on a specific biblical context than the others do, drawing on the rich table imagery of Psalm 23 to meditate on the nourishment to be found in Christ through the sacraments of the church and Scripture. However, in its other formal features, including context clues pointing to a literal meal setting (lines 3–5, 99–101), it fits the rest of the homilies.

[19] The longest has 110 (*PT* 3) and the shortest 96 (*PT* 8). *PT* 1 has 99 lines in Bedjan's edition, the odd number showing that a line has fallen out of some of the manuscripts (see note on *PT* 1, line 25).

more, to be more disciplined in their consumption of food and wine, to share with others, to appreciate those who serve them, and to be satisfied with what they have.

At more subtle levels of operation, the homilies tutor the diners in perceiving the sacred and biblically resonant dimensions of what it means to share food in community as followers of Jesus and worshippers of God. Yet one theme recurs most often—the call to respond in praise and thanksgiving to the Sustainer, as in the following exhortation from *PT* 4 (lines 85–88, 93–94):

> Look, and marvel; breathe, and wonder; taste, and give thanks,
> because the fragrance and color and sweet flavor are for you.
> He has provided for you all these pleasures in accordance with
> the senses you possess,
> so that you may be wholly delighted by his wonderful generosity.
> …
> Now, to the one who gives you these fair things, repay
> sounds of praise from your lips in exchange for these senses!

Given the religious nature of these homilies, it is unsurprising that they are full of religious vocabulary, including: terms describing God and his nature, doxological expressions, language alluding to biblical contexts, and the language of Christian virtues (and vices). These homilies also use a number of terms that carry more specialized theological freight for Jacob and other Syriac authors, including: *remzō*, ('signal, wink, nod'), *rōzō* ('symbol'), *ḥayē* ('life, salvation'), and *nuhrō* ('light'). Certain expressions that often have Christological connotations, particularly in liturgical or dogmatic contexts, are also common here. The term *ḥlaṭ* ('mix, intermingle') is commonly used as it is here, for mixing wine or kneading bread, but in dogmatic texts it may describe the incarnation and in liturgical contexts it may describe the preparation of the Eucharist. The same is true of the synonym *mzag* ('mix, intermingle'). In a number of other contexts Jacob uses the image of *pirō* ('fruit') for Christ, and its Eucharistic associations are commonplace; *pirō* appears several times in these homilies as well. Terms such as *laḥmō* ('bread'), *ḥamrō* ('wine'), *kōsō* ('cup'), and *pōthurō* ('table') constitute part of the standard Eucharistic vocabulary; as we might expect, they occur routinely in these homilies also, where food, utensils, and especially the table itself are often in view.

Whereas it is tempting to presume that Jacob uses such terms to evoke Christological and liturgical connections, a careful study of their usages in these homilies shows that this is not normally the case. Most often in these homilies Jacob uses such terms in their basically literal sense, i.e. for food and drink and meal preparations. Only occasionally does he use such terms deliberately to evoke Christological connections. When he uses them metaphorically in these homilies, he normally does so in ways that rely heavily on the mundane meanings of the words, e.g. when he compares teaching at mealtime with 'mixing' the spiritual Word and earthly bread at the dining table (*PT* 2, line 3). *Praise at Table* 2 celebrates bread and wine, yet it makes only sparing allusions to the Eucharistic elements (e.g. *PT* 2, lines 50, 101–02), focusing instead on the wonders of wheat production and wine fermentation as occasions for praising the Creator; the elements' eucharistic function appear alongside other benefits of the produce. This is not to say that these homilies never employ food imagery to evoke theological dimensions of meaning, but the typical usage is more literal. In addition to *laḥmō*, meaning 'bread' specifically but often denoting 'food' in a general sense, the term *mekulthō* ('food') occurs frequently. Similar terms commonly occurring in the cycle include *uklō* ('food'), *mōzunō* ('sustenance'), *saybōrōthō* ('provisions'), *ṭʿōmtō* ('savours, tasty morsels'), and *shōruthō* ('meal, feast').

The ways in which these homilies sacralize food and mealtimes illuminate other dimensions in the practice of theological construction than are normally highlighted in studies of dogmatic language. The literal usage of the terms in communal meal contexts help convey their primary meaning, so that Jacob and other authors may construct more richly metaphorical meanings in other contexts. One can imagine that when Jacob's audience encountered more Christologically rich food and table imagery in liturgical, exegetical, and dogmatic contexts, their mealtime experiences as enriched by these homilies served to deepen their appreciation for the earthier dimensions of the religious imagery they encountered. Jacob's *Praise at Table* homilies may have similar impact on readers today.

OUTLINES AND TITLES

Systematically outlining the homilies can be difficult, since they are full of recurring themes and tend not to follow linear progressions. The following gives a basic outline for each homily.

Homily numbers 139–146 correspond to Bedjan's numbering. The numbered titles 1–8 occur in Bedjan but also in many of the manuscripts, e.g. 'Homily 1 on Praise at Table.' Bedjan also supplied parenthetical subtitles in his Syriac table, with slightly different titles in French.[20] The subtitles are partially descriptive of the homilies' contents but are less apt in some cases than others. For instance, Homily 5 touches on 'almsgiving,' but focuses more on 1) the benefits of hearing the Word, and 2) the need for diners to produce the spiritual fruit of righteous deeds and praise. Homily 6 mentions wine but is more of a pastoral meditation using Psalm 23. Homily 4 deals equally with the rose as with bees. Hence, some of the titles supplied here differ from those of Bedjan.

Homily 139: Homily 1 on Praise at Table—Providence

1–10	Invocation to the Son for a message from his Word	
11–79	The divine Will provides for all	
	11–29	He provides for heavenly and earthly creatures
	30–41	He provides for birds and farmers, the anxious and non-anxious
	42–63	He provides for babies in the womb
	64–79	He is the source of rich sustenance for the pious and the wicked
80–97	We learn through the story of Israel in the wilderness to rely on the Lord without anxiety	
98–99	Praise to him who is the table full of life	

[20] Bedjan's Syriac subtitles are: 1) Providence, 2) Bread and Wine, 3) The Word of Life, 4) Bees, 5) Alms, 6) Consecrated Wine, 7) Gluttony, and 8) Withholding Thanksgiving (Bedjan, 916). His corresponding French subtitles are: 1) Providence Provides for All, 2) Bread and Wine, 3) Readings at Table, 4) The Bee and Honey, 5) Alms, 6) Consecrated Wine, 7) Gluttony, and 8) Ingratitude (Bedjan, viii–ix).

Homily 140: Homily 2 on Praise at Table—Bread & Wine

- 1–18 Invitation for diners to express the praise and gratitude they owe
- 19–62 The divine Will superintends the production of bread
  - 19–40 Through wind and rain the Creator resurrects dead grains into wheat
  - 41–50 The farmer cherishes his bride, the wheat
  - 51–62 Thanks is due the Sustainer for his wondrous provision of bread
- 63–104 The divine Will superintends the production of wine
  - 63–92 Through sun and changing temperatures he manages the marvelous process by which water becomes wine
  - 93–104 Wine has the capacity to transform people emotionally, and through its use in the Eucharist to enliven people spiritually
- 105–06 Praise to him who has prepared these delights

Homily 141: Homily 3 on Praise at Table—The Word of Life and Moderation

- 1–6 Invitation for diners to receive the spiritual Word with their physical food
- 7–60 The Word of Life is better than earthly food
  - 7–30 The benefits of the Word are lasting, whereas the effects of earthly food are fleeting and can be detrimental
  - 31–42 Just as food has been fraught with dangers since Eden, food discipline imparts power to defeat many spiritual challenges
  - 43–50 Food is best when consecrated with thanksgiving and seasoned with helpings of the Word
  - 51–60 Do not imitate Eve who ate food lustfully, but Elijah who ate ascetically, due to hunger
- 61–82 We should be satisfied with what we have and guard against overeating
- 83–104 Encouragement to be discerning about wine, for it has the capacity to change people for evil or good
- 105–10 Let us repay him praise who has given to us so richly

Homily 142: Homily 4 on Praise at Table—The Bee and the Rose

- 1–10 Invitation for diners to open mouths in praise
- 11–38 The Creator has made the bee that supplies us with honey
  - 11–26 The bee produces a wondrous crop wherever it is, using only the capacities with which the Creator has endowed it
  - 27–38 The bee's home and ways are a marvel of engineering and wisdom
- 39–68 The Creator has made the rose that gives us delightful color and fragrance
  - 39–52 Though seemingly detestable due to its name and its thorns, its color and fragrance are wondrous fair
  - 53–68 The discerning should praise the one who brings such delights from unlikely sources
- 69–92 The Creator is constantly attentive to our needs and pleasures
  - 69–84 All sorts of creatures work unceasingly on our behalf so we may praise God and minister to him unceasingly
  - 85–92 Fragrance and color abound in order to delight our senses and excite our praise
- 93–102 Warning not to be like ungrateful Israel in the wilderness
- 103–04 Let us give thanks for the generosity of the Good One

Homily 143: Homily 5 on Praise at Table—Fruits of Righteousness

- 1–16 Invitation and invocation
  - 1–8 Invitation for diners to complete their meal by feasting on the Word
  - 9–16 Invocation to Instruction to make an appearance
- 17–40 Any time is the right time to proclaim the Word
  - 17–28 The Word supplies timely sustenance in every season

29–40 Earthly foods and those who feast on them pass away swiftly
41–94 We are trees meant to produce the Lord's fruit
41–60 We should not labor for food that spoils but produce the fruit that comes from feeding on the Word
61–94 We produce fruit superior to the produce of earthly trees
61–82 The nourishing blood of the Son and the waters of baptism enable us to produce marvelous fruit
83–94 Our fruits are righteous deeds and our leaves are faithful words
95–104 We return thanks for the delights we enjoy
95–102 Let us produce the fruits of virtue and praise
103–04 Let us praise the Lord at all times and in all ways

Homily 144: Homily 6 on Praise at Table—The Lush Meadows of Scripture

1–12 Invocation
1–8 May the Lord refresh the souls of the diners with spiritual food
9–12 May the Shepherd cause us to graze in lush pastures beside still waters
13–30 The Son guides, protects, and heals, setting a table in the presence of sinners so they may drink life
31–52 The Son has prepared a table in the presence of our enemies
31–40 The implements of Eucharist and Baptism defeat the enemy
41–52 The intoxicating cup of the Son's blood remedies the dragon's sting
53–90 The Son was sent to shepherd us and the scriptures to feed us
53–68 Grace mercifully persuaded the Father to send the Son to shepherd and liberate us
69–90 Grazing on the pasturage of the scriptures brings life to the soul

91–103 The Word of Life is beloved everywhere because it brings sustenance to an arid world
104 Doxology

Homily 145: Homily 7 on Praise at Table—Moderation and Contentment

1–10 Invocation and Invitation
- 1–8 Invocation for Instruction to mix its wine and satisfy the soul
- 9–10 Invitation for diners to take spiritual refreshment from the Word

11–36 Overeating is unnatural
- 11–18 Eating is natural but gluttony violates nature
- 19–36 Allow the will to govern the appetites by setting limits and building good habits

37–52 It is more virtuous to let food spoil than to practice gluttony
53–80 Rather than craving quantity and variety, we should recognize love in what food we receive, cultivate love in the shared meal and be discerning, and season our meal with praise
81–94 Those who do not repay praise and thanksgiving will be repaid with discipline
95–100 Praise to him who feeds all, without expecting remuneration

Homily 146: Homily 8 on Praise at Table—Gratitude

1–18 Invitation for diners and attendants to make room for the preacher tasked with bringing the Word to feed the soul
19–78 The Children of the Bride are not ungrateful like the children of Israel in the wilderness
- 19–38 Despite all the provisions and care, the people in the wilderness complained against Moses and the Lord
- 39–68 Justice chastised the Hebrews with snakes
  - 39–54 Snakes are content with a diet of dust, yet the people complained about fine food

55–68 The bitter bites of snakes was just compensation for the ungrateful biting and chewing of the people

69–78 The people in the wilderness rejected God, his food, and his Son, but the Children of the Bride love God and are grateful

79–94 The Daughter of the Peoples wishes to repay the Lord with praise

79–90 Praise and thanksgiving to the Lord from the table

91–94 Blessing on those at the table and on those serving

95–96 Doxology

MANUSCRIPTS WITH THESE HOMILIES

The manuscript tradition ascribes the homilies, 'On Praise at Table,' to Jacob, although much about the manuscript heritage will remain vague until it becomes possible to inspect a greater number of sources more directly.

For his edition, Bedjan uses what he describes as 'copies from Beirut and Mardin,'[21] without giving further information about his sources. In the few places where Bedjan indicates disagreement between the manuscripts, he designates them simply 'B' and 'M' in his textual apparatus.[22] The following may be taken as likely candidates of Bedjan's sources, given here according to the numbering that Arthur Vööbus supplies in his study of Jacob's manuscript tradition:[23]

1) III, 7.1–8 — Sharfeh Patr. 143 (copied 1676)
2) VI, 2.150–57 — Mardin Orth. 130 (copied 12th– or 13th–century)

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[21] Bedjan, viii–ix.

[22] The present edition does not reproduce the textual apparatus, though occasionally the translation signals variant readings where they are pertinent to the translation.

[23] Vööbus, *Überlieferung I*, 74, 118–20, 127–28, 162–63; idem, *Überlieferung II*, 36–37, 72–73, 92–93.

3) VI, 5.86–93 — Mardin Orth. 131 (copied 13th century)

The first manuscript is a good candidate for the 'copy from Beirut' (B) due to its connection to Sharfeh. In its first part it includes a cycle of eight numbered homilies 'On Praise at Table' ascribed to Jacob; it is likely that these correspond to the eight edited by Bedjan. They are followed by one homily, 'On the deceased,' a lone homily, 'On Praise at Table,' and finally a cycle of nine homilies 'On Praise at Table' ascribed to Ephrem (i.e. *MMensa*). Vööbus correlates the nine homilies 'On Praise at Table' ascribed to Jacob in this manuscript (i.e. eight numbered plus one lone homily) with Bedjan's texts, yet without noticing the discrepancy in number: Bedjan has a cycle of just eight homilies.[24] In the manuscript tradition, Jacob's *PT* homilies are known to occur often alongside the similar cycle attributed to Ephrem, *MMensa*.[25]

The second and third manuscripts in the list above are candidates for Bedjan's Mardin manuscript (M). These two large volumes contain many homilies ascribed to Jacob. Both manuscripts have a cycle of eight numbered homilies near the end, entitled, 'On Praise at Table.' Both manuscripts have been been digitized.[26] The orthography of the manuscripts normally match that of Bedjan's edition. Indeed, an analysis of the text indicates that one of these is likely to be the manuscript Bedjan used, i.e. it corresponds to M in his apparatus. For instance, at many points the text of one or both the Mardin manuscripts agrees with Bedjan's readings for M against B(eirut). However, Bedjan appears to have missed some of M's variants, and in a few places his apparatus attributes to B the readings of M, or attributes to M readings that it does not have, per-

[24] Vööbus, *Überlieferung I*, 74.

[25] See p. 8 (above), 22–25 (below).

[26] The Hill Museum & Manuscript Library has digitized the manuscripts: Mardin, Church of the Forty Martyrs 130 (CFMM 00130; folios 243r–250v) and 131 (CFMM 00131; folios 425v–435v). I am very appreciative of the Church of the Forty Martyrs, the Hill Museum & Manuscript Library, and Saint John's Abbey and University in Collegeville, Minnesota for their assistance in making the images of this and other manuscripts available for consultation.

haps those actually found in B instead. At times Bedjan "corrects" M, yet an inspection of the manuscripts shows that Mardin Orth. 130 and 131 have the very reading that Bedjan supplies as editor, rather than the one listed for M in his apparatus. It is likely that inconsistent editorial practices and erroneous transcriptions account for these anomalies. Despite the discrepancies, Mardin Orth. 130 and/or 131 remain the most likely candidates for Bedjan's M. Yet without more information the identification of his sources must remain tentative—as will a full assessment of Bedjan's accuracy in transcribing and editing the manuscripts. Mardin Orth. 130 also has a set of three similar homilies ascribed to Ephrem at the very end of the volume (i.e. *MMensa*); Mardin Orth. 131 does not have Ephrem's *MMensa*.

Uncertainties about the manuscript tradition are especially acute when we turn to other sources that have varying numbers of homilies ascribed to Jacob with titles approximating, 'On Praise at Table,' or simply, 'On the Table:'

Jacob Collections[27]

- II, 2.29–30 — Sharfeh Patr. 30 (two 'On Praise at Table;' no date given)
- III, 9.9–10 — Mardin Orth. 156 (*PT* 1 and 6; copied late 18th century)[28]
- VI, 3.132–138 — Diyarbakir Mar Jaqob 1/3 (*PT* 1–8 'On Praise at Table;' copied 12th or 13th century)[29]

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[27] Vööbus, *Überlieferung I*, 57–58, 76, 120–21, 128–29, 138–47, 154–55, 165–70; idem, *Überlieferung II*, 18–19, 38–39, 80–81, 96–97, 130–31, 142–43, 156–59, 186–87, 202–03.

[28] The manuscript has been digitized by the Hill Museum & Manuscript Library: Mardin, Church of the Forty Martyrs 156 (CFMM 00156; fol. 76v–85r).

[29] The manuscript has been digitized by the Hill Museum & Manuscript Library: Diyarbakir, Meryem Ana Syriac Orthodox Church (DIYR 00003; fol. 483r–487v). Although Vööbus lists only seven homilies, an inspection of digitized images of the manuscript reveals that it originally had all eight. Portions of the homilies are now defective.

- VI, 6.87–94 — Mardin Orth. 132 (*PT* 1, 2, 5, and 7; copied in 1615/6)[30]
- VII, 1.172–181 — Damascus Patr. 12/13 (*PT* 1–8 and two additional homilies 9–10 'On Praise at Table;' copied 1031)[31]
- VII, 2.175–184 — Damascus Patr. 12/14 (*PT* 1–8 and two additional homilies 9–10 'On Praise at Table;' copied 11th century)
- VII, 3.177–186 — Damascus Patr. 12/15 (*PT* 1–8 and two additional homilies 9–10 'On Praise at Table;' copied 1156)[32]
- VII 8.177–186 — Mardin Orth. 136 (*PT* 1–8 and two additional homilies 9–10 'On Praise at Table;' copied 1725)[33]

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[30] The manuscript has been digitized by the Hill Museum & Manuscript Library: Mardin, Church of the Forty Martyrs 132 (CFMM 00132; fol. 332r–339r). It contains four of the homilies, though it may originally have had one or two more. *PT* 2 and 5 are defective due to damaged folios and *PT* 7 is incomplete due to missing folios. Vööbus erroneously identifies *PT* 5 as *PT* 3 (*Überlieferung, II*, 97). A number of Ephrem's *MMensa* follow Jacob's homilies.

[31] Dolabany, *Catalogue*, 68, 70 does not provide incipits to aid in identifying the homilies in Damascus Patr. 12/13 and 12/14, but the contents are likely to be parallel to those in Damascus Patr. 12/15, for which he supplies more detail (see note 32 below). The cycle of Ephrem's *MMensa* follow Jacob's homilies in these manuscripts.

[32] It has been possible to identify these homilies from the incipits in Dolabany, *Catalogue*, 55–56. Homily 9 does not fit the *Praise at Table* genre (see note 33 below). The final homily of the cycle is entitled, "Ten, on Praise at Table," but is known in at least one other manuscript as "On the Priesthood and on the Table;" it does not fit the genre. Micheline Albert edited it from a Sinai manuscript: "Mimro inédit de Jacques de Saroug sur le sacerdoce et l'autel," *Parole de l'Orient* 10 (1981–1982): 51–77.

[33] The manuscript has been digitized by the Hill Museum & Manuscript Library: Mardin, Church of the Forty Martyrs 136 (CFMM 00136). In addition to *PT* 1–8 (pages 172–93), it includes homilies numbered 9 and 10 (pages 193–200), both corresponding to the parallel homilies occurring in Damascus Patr. 12/15 (see previous note). Homily 10 corre-

- VIII, 8.23 — Midyat, Gülçe 12 (one homily 'On the Table;' copied 1908)

The quantity of homilies 'On Praise at Table' attributed to Jacob in these collections varies, though it is noteworthy that the cycle of eight occurs in five of them, four of which have an additional two. However, these additional homilies, though numbered nine and ten in the four manuscripts, do not fit the genre.[34] Most are numbered, but not all. Furthermore, many of these collections also contain cycles of homilies ascribed to Ephrem designated, 'On Praise at Table,' or something similar (i.e. *MMensa*).

The following manuscripts have what Vööbus calls 'scattered memre:'

Scattered Homilies of Jacob[35]

- XXVIII, 3 — Vatican, syr. 562 (Homily 7[36] 'On Praise at Table;' copied 1487)
- XXVII, 4 — Qaraqosh, orth. (B) (one homily 'On Praise at Table' and one 'On the Table;' no date given)
- XXI, 21 — Mardin, Orth. 153 (Homily 7 'On the Table;'[37] copied 1907)

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sponds to the homily edited by Albert; Homily 9 explores the typological associations between Christ and the church as bridegroom and bride. The cycle of Ephrem's *MMensa* follow Jacob's homilies.

[34] See notes 32–33.

[35] Vööbus, *Überlieferung, III*, 107–08, 110, 134–35, 138; idem, *Überlieferung IV*, 54–55, 66–67, 68–69.

[36] In agreement with Vööbus, A. van Lantschoot identifies it as Homily 7 (A. van Lantschoot, *Inventaire des manuscript syriaques des fonds Vatican (490–631) Barberini Oriental et Neofiti* [Studi e Testi 243; Vatican City: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 1965], 88).

[37] Vööbus supplies the incipit: 'Food does not give life to people…,' which is in fact line 9 of Homily 7 (see Bedjan, 905). Since he identifies the homily in Vatican, syr. 562 as also being Homily 7, and in light of its subject matter, moderation and gluttony, perhaps Homily 7 was a favorite for inclusion in collections.

- XXI, 25 — Mardin, Orth. 883 (Homily 5[38] 'On the Table;' modern copy)
- Hiersemann, 500/3[39] (Homily 4;[40] copied 882).

It is clear that at least some of these homilies correlate to those that are included in this edition and translation, although the scope of the text may vary (e.g. Mardin, Orth. 153). Given the apparent popularity of homilies on this theme, it is not possible to correlate and differentiate them accurately without more detailed information about the contents of all the manuscripts.[41]

What is certain is that a cycle of eight homilies attributed to Jacob and bearing the title, 'On Praise at Table' occurs in multiple manuscript witnesses. Presumably, this cycle corresponds to the material in the present volume. A cycle of ten homilies circulated as well, though the degree of overlap is unknown. Selected homilies or their excerpts are also to be found in a variety of other witnesses, at least portions of which parallel the texts occurring in one or more of the larger cycles. These homilies attributed to Jacob frequently occur alongside *MMensa* attributed to Ephrem. A critical edition of *PT* is desirable, as is further research on the collections themselves. An analysis of the volumes in which these homilies appear would help clarify the thematic profiles of the volumes'

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[38] Vööbus identifies it as Homily 5 (*Überlieferung III*, 110).

[39] Vööbus does not list this manuscript, also known as Codex syriacus secundus and published in facsimile form by Strothmann (see Strothmann, *Codex syriacus secundus*, 11, 72).

[40] The text of Homily 4 occurs in fragmentary form in the manuscript (folios 58v–59r). Although noting that one couplet in the homily praises the bee, Strothmann incorrectly identifies this as an unknown work of Jacob's 'On Love,' having been misled by a title supplied by the manuscript's corrector; the original title is illegible in the published facsimile. I am indebted to Sebastian P. Brock for having directed me to this manuscript.

[41] Vööbus also identifies excerpts from a homily 'On the Table' ascribed to Jacob and written in Garshuni in manuscript XII, 10 (Dyarbakir, Basaranlar 33; copied 1631/2; *Überlieferung III*, 50–51; *Überlieferung IV*, 20–21).

compositions as well as defining the contributions that selected homilies 'On Praise at Table' were meant to make to the functions of the volumes in which they occur.

THE TRANSLATION

The English translation nearly always follows the printed text. In rare instances, the translation follows a variant reading instead; these few departures are clearly explained in the notes.

In order to convey the sense and feel of the original, the translation tends toward the literal. However, in many places the translation favors more dynamic renderings for the sake of creating clear and readable English style. Occasionally words are supplied in parentheses when they are deemed helpful to conveying the sense in English. The homilies are replete with clusters of nearly synonymous terms, such as the numerous words indicating food, or the range of terms referring to gluttony, intemperance, indulgence, greed, and immoderate behavior that occur especially in *PT* 3 and 7. Meanings often overlap and different Syriac words may appear partly for stylistic reasons, so the translation does not render such terms with wooden consistency, but varies the English vocabulary according to context and for the sake of readability.

The notes offer alternative renderings where the sense would be significantly different. Occasionally the notes also explain the literal wording behind a translation, for the sake of clarity in comparing the English to the Syriac.

Where the context indicates gender neutrality, the translation favors gender inclusive renderings, usually by means of pluralizing the forms. For instance, in *PT* 6 (line 87), the translation has 'those who graze' instead of the more literal, 'he who grazes': 'The Lord is the pasturage for *those who graze* spiritually…'

Although close biblical citations are rare in Jacob's verse homilies, clear allusions abound; the notes indicate biblical allusions. The notes also give occasional commentary on the text. The commentary focuses on such things as word play, identifying major themes, and explaining significant interpretive backgrounds in order to help the reader appreciate the text.

TEXT AND TRANSLATION

HOMILY 139: ON PRAISE AT TABLE 1—PROVIDENCE

O Son of God, who is the wealth and treasury of his Father,
give to me your word, for it is wealth to the one who loves it.
O great doorway, through which a person enters into the presence of your Parent,
open yourself to me that I may go in and be enriched by your treasures.
O image of the glory of the hidden Father, allow me to see you,
so that I may depict your beauty to the entire world in hymns.
O light that shines on the creatures and gladdens them,
illumine me too on account of the mercy abounding within you.
You are the Sustainer, you are rich, you are the merciful one—
enable me to give thanks, marveling in your creative power.
From what belongs to you, Lord, the realms obtain what they need,
and you are the one who fulfills the wants of people.
Each one in its own place lives because of you, right where it is,
because you are a table full of life for every class of being.
The watchers[1] above suckle life from your flame,
and with fire you sustain the life of the seraphs[2] spiritually.
As for humans, you nourish them with bread[3] and water,

[1] Many ancient Jewish and Christian sources use the term 'watchers' to designate angelic beings.

[2] Literally, 'fiery ones,' an expression used for seraphs.

[3] Or 'food and water.' The term 'bread' is often used generally to mean 'food.'

B 139

ⲁⲟⲩ ϩⲓⲣⲱⲙⲓ ⲙⲡⲓⲣⲁϩⲧ ⲛⲁⲩ ⲙⲙⲟⲥ ⲛⲁⲓ ⲛⲓⲙ ⲉⲧⲙⲁⲩ
ⲉⲣⲟⲥ ⲛⲓⲙ ⲉⲧⲟⲩⲁⲁⲃ
ⲙⲡⲓⲣⲁϩⲧ ⲙⲡⲉϫⲉ.
ϩⲓⲣⲱⲙⲓ: ⲛⲓⲙ ⲁⲛⲟⲕ ⲁⲛⲟⲕ ⲛⲓⲙ ⲉⲧⲙⲁⲩ

872 1 ϫⲉ ⲁⲛⲟⲕ ⲛⲓⲙ ⲉⲓⲙⲓ ⲛⲁⲓ ⲛⲉⲧⲉⲣⲉⲛⲓⲙ:
ⲁⲛⲟⲕ ⲙⲛ ⲡⲓⲙⲓ ⲛⲓⲙ ⲛⲁⲓ ⲛⲉⲧⲉⲣⲉⲛⲓⲙ ⲙⲙⲟⲥ ⲛⲁⲓ ⲛⲓⲙ ⲉⲧⲙⲁⲩ ⲉⲣⲟⲥ ⲛⲓⲙ ⲉⲧⲟⲩⲁⲁⲃ
ⲁⲩⲱ ⲛⲓⲙ ⲉⲧⲟⲩⲁⲁⲃ ⲉⲩⲛⲁⲩ ⲉⲣⲟⲥ ⲛⲁⲓ ⲛⲓⲙ ⲉⲧⲙⲁⲩ ⲉⲣⲟⲥ ⲛⲓⲙ ⲉⲧⲟⲩⲁⲁⲃ
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ⲁⲩⲱ ⲛⲓⲙ ⲉⲧⲟⲩⲁⲁⲃ ⲛⲁⲓ

for each person seeks life from you according to its kind:
for spiritual ones, you provide in a spiritual manner,
and physical ones you feed in a physical manner.
In the ocean, the contents of your table satisfy the fish of the sea,
and without a care they are delighted by your gift there.
In the heart of the ocean, in a place where any who venture down to it drown,
the water-dwellers thrive there in their own pathways,
and your Will[4] stands ready as steward and attendant,[5]
so that no fish there lacks sustenance,
nor do the creeping things ever need to borrow life.
All are satisfied, all partake, all continue to live,
because your hidden Will fulfills their needs for them.
Out of your treasury you also give the birds
life each day,[6] so that they do not worry about what they will eat.
You preserve them without barns and without storehouses,[7]
so that they may live always without a care, from one day to the next.
You are also the one who gives to the farmers all the crops

[4] Jacob often uses the Syriac *remzō* ('Will') to refer to the mysterious movement of God's will (also lines 28, 41, 52, 80, 83, and 89). Though the image is that of a divine signal in the form of a nod, wink, or gesture, it is difficult to capture the full meaning of the word in English translation. The term 'Will' is used throughout this translation.

[5] It appears that a line is missing from some of the manuscripts and Bedjan's edition. The manuscript Mardin, Church of the Forty Martyrs 156 supplies an additional twelve-syllable line after 26, resolving an imbalance in the lines in this part of the homily:

and your Will stands ready as steward and attendant,
to provide sustaining foods in their domains,
so that no fish there lacks sustenance,…

[6] The translation follows the manuscripts, having 'life' (*ḥayē*) rather than Bedjan's conjecture, 'live' (*ḥoyō*). Bedjan's edition has, 'Out of your treasury you also give to the birds; / each day they live without worrying about what they will eat.'

[7] See Matthew 6:26.

ܒܟܬܐ ܕܐܒܗ ܩܕܫ ܗܘܐ ܡܢܝ ܫܡܗ ܘܬܫܒܘܚܬܐ ܕܫܡܝܐ ܘܒܪܥܐ ܘܟܠ ܙܝܢܝ ܒܪܝܬܐ ܘܟܠ ܙܝܢ ܕܡܝ ܕܒܝܡܐ ܘܒܝܡܐ ܘܒܟܠ ܙܝܢ ܕܙܚܠܐ ܒܙܚܠ

from the fields, supporting their lives in their domains.
Both the industrious person and the person too lazy to work—
everyone survives by your gift, wherever they are.
The crows have not sown the fields nor have the fishes harvested,
yet each day they are as satisfied as the rich in their palaces.
The person who is apt to worry and the person who does not worry live each day,
and your Will nourishes every class of being without a care.

You nourish the babies enclosed within women's wombs,
there in the tight space where they are all hemmed in.
Within the mother's womb you also enclose pure breath
for the baby, so that it may survive without being squashed to death by that space.
Without a mouth it takes food in precise portions,
by your gift that is full of life for the whole world.
The baby inhabits a very constraining space, dark and compressed,
yet is untroubled by it, esteeming it as a king's palace.
It gets neither hungry nor thirsty and is not bothered,
and by your grace it receives life in keeping with its space.
Your hidden Will watches over it there and makes it grow,
leading it to come out of the darkness into the light.
You also put the milk into the bosom of the childbearing woman,

35 ڤلا ݣلكنا وأسا أنم ݣمشهتنم۞
874 ءاسا وڤعز ءاسا وݣلملا هم ڤهحسا:
سسا وه ڤحنف هم هههحلم أمڤا وّاملهوو۞
لا ووّحو ݣحنّا أڤلا ئةنا سرّوو سّقكلا:
ههحݣم ڤحنهم أسو ݣلّمنّا ڤاڤبتنم۞
40 وڤعز سرّم ءوّلا سرّم سسا ڤحنهم:
ءوّلا ّوملا حڤكم۞ لّحنّا محلوها وّهرم۞
حنّةلّا سڤتها حيّه ڤتهڤا وّحتتكلا:
محلوهمه أڤم كاناوا خهڤا وّسڤعم هم۞
ءحيّه ڤزها وّاڤا سڤمف كو هههڤا ئعبا:
45 حنّولّا وئسا ءوّلا نڤز وحهوو أناوا ءنڤعا۞
ءوّلا ڤههڤا ههمحلا اهطلا ڤلّمنلّمه:
هم هههحلم ههحنه سّنّا حنكهڤا ڤكه۞
ءهزّا خولّا كاناوا لّڭسرا وشڤهو ءروّمت:
50 ءاسو أڤبنا وڤحڤا سڤمت كه ولّا هشف كه۞
أڤلا ڤڤ أڤلا رّم ولا هملّئز:
ءكڤعا أناوا هڤلا سّنّا هم لّمڤعأو۞
ءوّهرو ڤههڤا رڤز هه أڤم ءهزّكا كه:
ءهزّك كه وهم شڤهڤا حنهءوّا تڤهو۞
ءحنكّجاا هڤأم أيه كه سّحڤا حسّبنه:

and then instruct the baby to come forth and find its food.
While inside its mother it survives there by your grace,
and you prepare a pure product by which it may grow.
And as it grows within the inner womb so precisely,
its sustenance also grows with it, so that it will not be in need.
And as soon as the baby comes forth when the woman gives birth,
it opens its mouth and finds the milk in its mother's breast.
In the same way you also provide the raven's young
with food at the right time when their parents are far away.

You are a table filled with plenty for anyone who hungers;
you are a vessel whose drink is sweet for anyone who thirsts.
You are a spring with enough for everyone to drink from it;
the bread of life that staves off death from those who have eaten it.
Look—everyone depends on you and you feed people of every status;
the nations and realms receive the contents of your treasury.
Your hand is filled with great plenty for people,
and when you open your hand they are richly satisfied.
Out of your treasures the entire world is supplied,
so that both good and evil people survive by you, for you are the Son of the Good.
Your sun shines on the righteous and on sinners,

ܗܟ ܦܦܒ ܐܝܠ ܬܦܫܠ ܟܘܠܐ ܗܬܦܣ ܐܘܚܟ܀ 55
ܒ ܘ ܚܐܗܠ ܣܬܐ ܐܘܟ ܗܟ ܟܚܠܐܪ: 875
ܘܚܟܟܬ ܐܝܠ ܐܘܐ ܬܒܐ ܬܐܙܐ ܗܟ܀
ܘܚܐ ܐܙܐ ܚܦܬܚܐ ܒܟܟܐ ܦܟܟܣܐܠ:
ܙܐ ܟܦܠ ܐܟ ܚܙܘܗ ܘܠܐ ܬܦܬ ܟܗ܀
ܗܦܣܐ ܒܙܐ ܟܘܠܐ ܚܬܟܐ ܟܗ ܣܟܒܐ: 60
ܚܟܣ ܦܘܦܗ ܗܣܟܐ ܦܚܦܣ ܟܠܐ ܒܐܦܗ܀
ܘܘܐ ܐܘܚ ܟܬܬ ܬܟܐ ܐܝܠ ܗܦܗ ܐܝܠ:
ܐܘܠܐ ܚܒܗܗ ܒ ܙܣܦܦ ܐܚܘܙܦ ܀
ܚܟܙܘܐ ܐܝܠ ܒܘܠܐ ܦܟܐ ܠܐܣܐ ܒܚܦ:
ܟܣܐ ܐܝܠ ܒܣܐ ܦܘܠ ܣܐ ܒܪܐ܀ 65
ܦܦܟܐ ܐܝܠ ܒܟܦܠ ܦܦܦ ܬܠܐ ܦܣܗ:
ܟܣܐ ܒܬܐ ܒܙܐ ܦܐܟܟܠ ܐܦܟܟܘܝ܀
ܘ ܐܐ ܚܗ ܦܠ ܘܟܦܠ ܦܦܦܣ ܐܝܠ ܐܐ ܐܝܠ:
ܘܠܐ ܟܒܗ ܬܦܦ ܟܦܦܐ ܗܟܐ ܦܣ܀
ܐܒܗ ܦܟܟܐ ܦܟܐ ܙܐ ܟܟܬܬܘܐ: 70
ܐ ܚܠܐ ܐܝܠ ܐܒܗ ܦܟܦ ܟܠܐܙܐܠ܀
ܦ ܦܬܦܠܗ ܦܠܦܬܦ ܚ ܟܟܐ ܦܠ:
ܗܠ ܦܣܗ ܙܐ ܟܐ ܙܒܦܐ ܗܟ ܣܠܐ:
ܒܬ ܦܟܗ ܟܠ ܙܒܦܐ ܗܟ ܣܠܐ:

and you cause your rain to fall on both the just and the wicked.[8]
The good Master, who feeds ungrateful servants,
and does not deny unbelievers what they need,
freely gives life out of his treasury every day,
and without charging fees[9] his Will nourishes the whole world,
He nourished the people in the desert with manna and quail,[10]
a pure food for a pure people, without harvests.
The hidden Will prepared a table and piled it up with plenty,
supplying luxuries and nourishing the people so that they had no worries.
Without sowing, without reaping, and without labor,
he provided food and satisfied the hungry out of his gift.
He commanded the elements and they disgorged good things from all sides—
the heights (brought forth) manna upon the camp and the depths quail.
His Will demanded a deep abyss from a small stone,[11]
and (the stone) produced the great Gihon[12] for the people to drink.
His will[13] was like a manager, taking care of
the Israelites by means of provisions (that came) without harvests.
For he would give them what they needed day by day,
carefully teaching them not to be anxious.
He taught them to rely on his steadfastness,

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[8] Matthew 5:45.

[9] See Isaiah 55:1.

[10] See Exodus 16.

[11] See Exodus 17:1–7; Numbers 20:1–13.

[12] Gihon is the name of one of the rivers in Eden (see Genesis 2:13; Sirach 24:27) and also a major spring supplying water in ancient Jerusalem (see 1 Kings 1:33, 38, 45; 2 Chronicles 32:30; 33:14). The term derives from a root meaning, 'to gush forth.' Various interpretive traditions treat the primeval topography of Eden, the miraculous provision of water in the wilderness, and the spring-water flowing from beneath the temple mount. Here the reference accentuates the Lord's abundant provision by making a metaphorical identification.

[13] Here, 'will' translates a more common term, not *remzō* (see note 4 above).

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and he instructed them not to be anxious for more.
When he is the supplier, what need does anyone have for concern,
since his treasury is full, and it would be superfluous for its overseer to be anxious?
He is plenty and he is the table full of life.
Blessed is he who nourishes all realms out of his gift!

The End of Homily 1 on Praise at Table

95 ةولا نارقم لاسنا قفا نم؛
هذا هو ان لصفم هدحنا لإنعا زجلا:
ءطلا ىلع ءاج نسانه عسم سؤوفا؛
877 ةءش هحنا هه فلؤوا ءطلا سنا:
لسم ءملؤوها لصفلا نحقا مع هةحلاه؛

هكم هاهنا عبهنا: ولا أهصسلا وفلؤوا.

HOMILY 140: ON PRAISE AT TABLE 2—BREAD AND WINE

Come and be refreshed at our table by the word of the Lord,
for indeed (his word) is food to the person who lives discerningly.[1]
We have filled up on bread;[2] let us mix with it the Word of Life,
by which the life of the soul is sustained spiritually.
The person who eats without giving thanks is like the beasts,
who are never stirred to praise the Lord.
We have mouths and speech and minds,
and these things make us superior to the beasts;
but if we give no consideration to this dignity of ours, as it is written,
'Behold, we have become like animals in our actions.'[3]
Our table with its tasty morsels stirs praise within us,
so we will not be like the ungrateful people for not having given praise.
We should not only be concerned that the foods are delicious,
but that we are mixing the Word of Life with our provisions.
Let us marvel at the bread, praising its Creator,
so that our very food will be the inspiration for our hymns.
The Creator is amazing, marvelous and glorious in his doings,
because of the way he creates and how he sustains life every day!

[1] Jacob often refers to discernment, appraising it as a principal virtue granting spiritual insight.

[2] 'Bread' or 'food.' The term 'bread' is often used generally to mean 'food.'

[3] See Psalm 49:20 (49:21; also 2 Peter 2:12).

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ⲙⲁⲣⲓⲁ .ⲙⲙ.

ⲱⲁⲱⲛ: ⲛⲥⲗ ⲁⲡⲥⲙⲁⲗⲁ ⲙⲁⲩⲱⲛ.

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1 ⲥⲙⲥⲗⲛⲉ ⲙⲛⲁⲓ ⲁⲛ ⲛⲁⲥⲙⲙ ⲥⲗ ⲩⲱⲛ:
ⲱⲁⲉ ⲙⲛ ⲁⲫⲗⲁ ⲓⲙ ⲗⲁⲗⲁ ⲙⲛⲧⲁ ⲩⲛⲉⲙⲱⲗⲁ⸗
ⲙⲥⲛⲓ ⲥⲙⲙⲁ ⲧⲙⲱⲁ ⲙⲥⲱⲁ ⲥⲙⲥⲗ ⲙⲧⲧⲁ:
ⲙⲁⲛⲁ ⲉⲱ ⲙⲙⲙⲓ ⲙⲧⲧⲁ ⲙⲁⲙⲱⲁ ⲩⲙⲛⲗⲁ⸗
5 ⲁⲗⲁ ⲱⲁⲁⲉ ⲥ̀ ⲗⲁ ⲙⲁⲱⲁ ⲁⲙ ⲙⲛⲩⲁⲁ ⲓⲙ:
ⲗⲁ ⲙⲁⲛⲁⲧⲛⲥ ⲥⲗ ⲁⲙⲥⲙⲁⲛ ⲙⲛⲁⲗ ⲙⲙⲛⲩⲙ⸗
ⲁⲙ ⲥⲉ ⲫⲙⲁⲗ ⲩⲁⲗ ⲥⲉ ⲙⲁⲗⲁ ⲥⲉ ⲙⲁⲛⲁ:
ⲙⲁⲙⲥⲙⲉ ⲉⲱ ⲙⲙⲛⲙⲙ ⲙⲉ ⲙⲛⲩⲁⲁ⸗
ⲱⲁ ⲕⲁⲙⲛⲁ ⲗⲁ ⲧⲁⲥⲙ ⲁⲙⲥ ⲱⲙⲙⲁ:
10 ⲙⲁ ⲥⲙⲙⲛⲧⲁ ⲁⲁⲱⲙⲙ ⲥⲙⲥⲃⲩⲁ⸗

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ⲙⲉ ⲩⲛⲉⲱⲛ ⲥⲙⲛⲙⲙⲁ ⲙⲙⲙ ⲥ ⲫⲙⲙⲛⲁ:
ⲗⲁ ⲧⲙⲁⲁ ⲥⲉ ⲁⲙ ⲗⲉⲥⲧⲙⲁ ⲱⲗⲁ ⲫⲥⲙⲙ⸗
ⲗⲁ ⲱⲙⲁⲥⲙⲁ ⲥⲙⲙⲙⲉ ⲙⲁⲙⲙ ⲁⲓ ⲙⲛⲧⲗⲁ:
ⲁⲗⲁ ⲧⲙⲱⲁ ⲙⲥⲱⲁ ⲙⲧⲧⲁ ⲥⲙⲙⲙⲧⲁⲗⲁ⸗
15 ⲥⲥⲙⲁ ⲧⲙⲁⲛ ⲙⲙⲛⲩⲙⲙⲉ ⲫⲙⲛⲁ ⲧⲙⲗⲁ:
ⲙⲙⲙ ⲙⲁⲩⲙⲥⲙⲁⲓ ⲁⲙⲁⲁ ⲥⲙⲁⲁ ⲥⲙⲙⲧⲁⲗⲁ⸗
ⲗⲙⲙⲉ ⲩⲛⲙⲁ ⲗⲁⲙ ⲙⲁⲙⲙⲥ ⲥⲙⲥⲃⲧⲁⲁ:
ⲱⲁⲙⲥ ⲩⲁⲁ ⲙⲁⲗⲁ ⲱⲁ ⲙⲧⲧⲁ ⲫⲙⲛⲙ⸗

The farmer's bread is buried in the soil and in the fields;
in the heart of the earth it decays and rots, turning to mud.
Then the Creator himself, wonderful in his doings,
calls the seed out of the decay, rousing it to spring forth.
He commands the thunder to make joyful noises to (the seed) on its harps,
and it rises up from ruin like one roused from slumber.
It cleaves the furrows and pierces the earth, its mother,
throwing off and scattering the clods that covered it.
When he calls to it, it stands erect before the thunder,
and the clouds sprinkle it with gentle showers, washing its face.
Flashes of lightning dart forth as messengers to the rain,
and the winds superintend his ministry so that the seed will grow.
Like a builder, the Will[4] of the Creative Power superintends
the fields, fashioning the grains of wheat in their spikes.
It reinforces the stalk of the ear with knotty joints,
so that (the plant) may stand firm in the face of the ministering breezes;
it causes water to flow from conduits in the clouds,
irrigating the fields so that the seed within them may grow.
Through their gentle showers, the clouds make the seed develop,
the breezes and the dew causing the grains of wheat to swell in their spikes.
What had been buried, decaying and rotting in the earth,

[4] For 'Will' (*remzō*; also in lines 75, 85), see note on *PT* 1, line 25.

ܟܣܬ ܚܙܐ ܕܐܡܪ ܐܢܐ ܕܡܩܛܝܪ:
ܡܬܐ ܕܡܣܟܠ ܕܚܒܪ ܫܡܐ ܚܟܝܡ ܐܢܐ۝ 20
ܗܘ ܕܥܒܕ ܐܠܐ ܐܝܟ ܕܚܒܝܒܐ:
ܡܢ ܚܙܐ ܒܝ ܒܪܬܐ ܕܟܬ ܛܒ۝
ܕܢܬܡܐ ܩܒܠ ܕܡܣܟܝܢ ܟܐ ܚܕܘܬܐ:
ܫܡ ܒܝ ܫܠܐ ܒܠܐܓܡ ܗܟ ܐܒܘܗ۝
ܙܐ ܫܠܗܐ ܕܥܒܪ ܟܐ ܠܐܢܐ ܐܡܐ: 25
ܗܒܐ ܡܐ ܒܐ ܒܢܐ ܕܡܒܪ ܟܐ۝
ܐܠܐ ܛܡܐ ܟܕܡܟ ܙܒܐ ܗܐ ܡܢܐ ܟܐ:
ܗܘܐ ܚܘܐ ܬܒܐ ܟܦܐܟ ܒܫܝ ܐܩܘܒ۝
ܗܘܗ ܟܬܐ ܒܢ ܢܪܒܐ ܟܦܐܟ ܛܐܡܢ:
ܗܡܬܒ ܙܘܐ ܟܐ ܐܦܐܟ ܒܙܐ ܛܡ۝ 30
ܫܡ ܐܙܘܠܐ ܡܐܡ ܙܦܪ ܒܚܙܐܐ:
ܟܐ ܫܩܟܐ ܗܦܐ ܡܐ ܟܦܫܬܒ۝ 879
ܕܦܪܙ ܟܐ ܟܒܐ ܒܦܐ ܗܒ ܡܗܬܐ:
ܟܙܐ ܐܩܦܡ ܟܕܡܟ ܙܘܐ ܦܩܘܐ۝
ܡܐܙ ܟܬܐ ܒܝ ܫܟܙܬܐ ܘܐܡ ܟܚܬܐ: 35
ܐܟܫܩܟܐ ܦܦܐ ܬܟܐ ܙܐܟ ܒܚܒ۝
ܐܦܬܚ ܟܐ ܚܙܐ ܚܬܐ ܟܬܫܦܒܡ:
ܗܘܘ ܐܠܐ ܦܦܩܒ ܫܡ ܟܦܫܬܒ۝
ܗܘ ܒܠܦܐ ܕܐ ܐܦܐ ܟܐܙܐ ܐܦܟܟ ܕܐ:

rises up and becomes a companion to the breezes, bearing itself magnificently.
The spikes are adorned like brides in their bridal chambers,
and the grains of wheat resemble the betrothed in their veils.
Each grain of wheat is veiled, allowing no one to see her face,
until she reaches the threshing floor, her bridal chamber, along with the farmer.
Then her betrothed, the farmer, reveals her face,
stripping her of her veil and gazing on her loveliness.
He embraces her in a great heap and rejoices with her,
making her wedding banquet with the first-fruits and the offerings.
He summons the priest, who blesses the bride (the farmer) has brought,
so that she becomes the wafer,[5] returning praise to her Creator.
After such wonders done by the Creative Power,
look—the satisfying fullness of bread now sits on your table!
He has given you bread; give him praise for his gift,
and as a discerning person, return the thanks you owe him.
While you were sleeping he made the grains of wheat grow in their spikes,
protecting them from harm and presenting them to you.
If you do not return thanks when you eat,
you are ungrateful, with an understanding as hard and slow as that of an animal.
Make the sign (of the cross) over your table and break the bread with thanksgiving,

[5] The term is commonly used for the bread of the Eucharist. Although the homilist sees the bread's role in the Eucharist as a culminating validation of God's wondrous work in providing grain, the homily invokes thanksgiving for 'the satisfying fullness' of food consumed in a non-Eucharistic meal (see lines 4–14, 52–53 57–62).

ܗܳܟ ܗܳܐ ܐܚܳܕ ܟܬܺܝܒ ܒ ܗܰܠܶܝܳܐ܀ 40
ܐܺܝܬ ܐܰܪܥܳ ܐܰܝ ܒܰܟܽܘܳ ܟܶܝܬܰܒ̈ܐ̈ܝ̈ܢ̈ܝ̈ܢ̈ܝ̈ܢ

so that you will not be ridiculed by all that is right for lacking discernment.
Look—every day the Sustainer takes pains to ensure you have tasty morsels;
give him praise in exchange for the nourishing things that bring you pleasure!

He has given you wine—drink a little and give thanks much,
lifting up praise to its maker in great wonder.
Ponder it in your mind, and marvel discerningly
at this product that is full of such wonder for the person who ponders it:
how the Creator of all causes water to move through the vines,
pulling and transferring it up through the branches.
He crafts grapes out of it and hangs them in bunches,
spreading leaves as veils over their faces.
He covers them up, honoring them like brides,
scrupulously caring for their concerns so that he may bring them to full maturity.[6]
He skillfully enclosed channels within their openings,
and as the one taking care of it all, he gave regard to the springs inside their wombs.
His Will instilled what they needed, little by little,
enclosing water inside their wombs like wineskins.
(His Will) commands his servant the sun to look after them,
and by its rays it warms and ferments them, getting them ready.
All summer long it ripens the water inside the grapes

[6] Literally, 'so that he may finish them in fullness.'

ولا تاسقب هم كانداا ولا قنه أيه۞
هذا ئدنا سرم كحشمم وهلقلمر:
هد له غمحسا سك قوتقمويي وهسبم كم۞
سوح كم سمدنا أهلم مكلا ذاوا هيمر:
ملقكنوه أهم غمحسا حلهوا وحا۞
حنحسلم سمو ذاوهنا قزمهلأم: 65
حاوها وطلا كله أهوا كبسلأ حه۞
وامح هتا حيقتا همشم هو حزا كلا:
محققحلا لبم همحن همهم لهوم۞
مسقلا هسم حتحا مالا كميكمتم:
هقنه لقتا أقت أزحا كلا أقتم۞ 70
محسقا لهم أم كلقلا سقن أتم:
مرم وهلم وحمحشمتا ليمقمو أتم۞ 881
ملمهمزمأه سله همكتا ليه قمهتم:
هام مرم كلا أسن تحا ليه قمتم۞
سمقم وهم حمكلا مكلا همقتم: 75
هام وحقا سله هتا ليه قمتم۞
محمقمه همما قمب نازم أتم:
مرمكمقمم عيز هزأس هلهم لهم۞
مليه حتحا معمقلا هتا مسما كله:

by the sun's fire so that they will become wine for the world to drink.
And the sun, as commanded by its Creator,
uses its heat to instill the grapes with fragrance and color.
Yet to prevent the sun from burning up those beauties by its heat,
it makes the rain fall and causes cool breezes to blow.
The Will stands like a caretaker brimming with sage skills,
expertly tending the grapes in their bunches—
at times making them ferment, at times cooling them down, at times warming them up,
at times (bringing) the dew, and at other times the breezes to cool them off.
It causes the seasons to pass, both hot and cool,
fashioning a product utterly teeming with celebration.
And once the water that it let fall has ripened and become wine,[7]
(the Will) summons the farmers to pick the bunches off their vines.

Now consider and observe the vine, a great wonder,
and offer praise—for it became pregnant with water yet gave birth to wine![8]
Recognize that the Creator put the water into the vines,
he ripened it so that it became wine, and look—you are drinking it!
It acquired color, it acquired flavor, and it acquired fragrance;
it also acquired potency so that a person's heart would rejoice when he or she drinks it.
For wine may be a source of consolation to any who mourn

[7] The transformation of water into wine echoes Jesus' miracle at the wedding feast (John 2:1–11).

[8] The wondrous transformation in the womb of the grape echoes the birth of the Son.

ܚܕܘܗ ܒܚܡܐ ܒܗܘܐ ܫܡܝܐ ܡܪܝܐ ܚܝܠܐ ܀ 80
ܐܢ ܒܝ ܚܡܐ ܐܡܪ ܒܚܕܐ ܒܟ ܟܘܬܗ׃
ܚܫܟܚܕܐܗ ܙܫܐ ܡܪܝܐ ܚܬܬܐ ܢܚܐ ܀
ܪܒܐ ܢܚܒ ܚܡܐ ܚܫܗܗ ܚܟܕܬܐ׃
ܚܐ ܐܢܐ ܒܟ ܚܡܐ ܚܫܗ ܫܢܬܐ ܀
ܐܡ ܙܗܐ ܐܡ ܪܫܐ ܗܐ ܫܩܚܐ׃ 85
ܪܚܒܐܗ ܚܟܙܗ ܚܬܬܐ ܚܟܝܚܟܐ ܀
ܪܟ ܚܙܐ ܪܟ ܚܡ ܪܟ ܟܝ׃
ܪܟ ܠܐ ܪܟ ܙܗܐ ܚܟܟܝܐ ܀
ܚܪ ܙܬܐ ܪܙܚܡܟ ܪܙܢܝ׃
ܐܟܒ ܚܡܚ ܐܒܐ ܙܐ ܫܒܐ ܀ 90
ܗܐ ܙܐܚܟܚ ܪܗܪ ܫܡܐ ܚܬܐ ܙܐܘܚ׃
ܐܐ ܠܐܬܐ ܡܚܐ ܟܝܟܐ ܚ ܚܢܙܗ ܀
ܫܙ ܐܝ ܗܐ ܫܐ ܟܝܚܐ ܐܗܙ ܙܐ׃ 882
ܙܟܐ ܢܚܐ ܬܒܒܐ ܫܡܐ ܗܪ ܐܚܟܫܐ ܀
ܪܚ ܫܐ ܬܒ ܫܡܐ ܚܐ ܐ ܚ ܚ ׃ 95
ܚܟܐ ܐܢ ܗܐ ܗ ܫܡܐ ܗܐ ܚܐ ܐܝ ܀
ܪܚ ܟܝܐ ܪܚ ܟܚܐ ܪܚ ܙܫܐ׃
ܪܚ ܫܐ ܗܐ ܙܐܚ ܐܝ ܬܒ ܟܚ ܀
ܙܟܚܐ ܬܪ ܫܡܐ ܚܟ ܙܐܟ׃

when they drink it, so that the hearts of all who are sad may rejoice.
And in addition to all this, the Son of God compared it to his blood,[9]
mixing[10] it in order to give it to a dead world to drink, that we might be revived by it.[11]
Give praise now, and afterward you will taste the wine forever!
Take in the aroma, marvel, and drink, being thankful as a discerning person.
Render praise to him who has prepared all these delights for you.
Blessed is he who has mixed for us his living cup, that we may be refreshed by it!

The End of Homily 2 on Praise at Table

[9] See Matthew 26:27–28. As with the bread above (see note 5), although the homilist is celebrating wine as a normal drink (see lines 63–64, 96–100), he highlights its Eucharistic use as a culminating expression of what God does by it.

[10] Mingling wine with water was a normal practice. Here the imagery also recalls the preparation of Eucharistic wine in Christian worship and the flow of blood and water from Jesus' side on the cross, with its incarnational implications (John 19:34).

[11] Reference to drinking from Jesus' life-giving cup recalls his promise of eternal life for those who drink his blood (John 6:53–58).

ꠇꠤ ꠉꠥꠛꠞ ꠎꠞ ꠛꠞꠛꠤ ꠇꠞꠤ ꠉꠞꠎ

HOMILY 141: ON PRAISE AT TABLE 3—THE WORD OF LIFE AND MODERATION

O discerning[1] ones, come and be refreshed spiritually
at the banquet prepared for us physically!
Body and soul both seek life from God:
the body food,[2] and the soul the Word, by which it may live.
We should not be concerned only with building up the body,
but with the soul, for it is more precious than earthly things.
It is not by bread and water alone that we have life,
but by the Word of the Lord,[3] for it is an immense treasure.
After all, very many foods are very enjoyable,
yet after a day they mean nothing to those who have eaten them.
The stomach is Sheol and it ruins the tasty foods,
so that all the lovely things shoved down into it become polluted—
all the delicious bits, all the delicacies, all the concoctions
are spoiled in it and the charm of the flavors perish.
The Word of the Lord is a sweet food that does not spoil,
for the Word of God's house produces no excrement.
In the dining room bread lies heavy on them who eat it,
but from instruction the soul acquires wings to fly!

[1] Jacob often refers to discernment, appraising it as a principal virtue granting spiritual insight.

[2] 'Food' or 'bread.' The term 'bread' is often used generally to mean 'food.'

[3] See Matthew 4:4; Deuteronomy 8:3.

B 141

ܘܡܢ ܕܐܬܝ ܒܗ ܠܥܠܡ ܐܠܗܐ ܕܚܝ ܘܩܝܡ
ܥܠ ܟܠ ܡܕܡ ܕܐܬܝ ܒܗ ܠܥܠܡ.
ܘܠܐ ܢܬܟܠ ܥܠ ܫܘܠܛܢ ܕܒܪ ܐܢܫ ܘܠܐ ܥܠ ܒܪ ܐܢܫ.

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1 ܐܘ ܩܛܝܢܐ ܕܐܬ ܒܚܟܡܬ ܘܡܫܠܐ:
ܠܐ ܐܬܘܡܝ ܘܐܠܗܘܬ ܟ ܩܝܡܠܐ ❊
ܩܝܡ ܐܢܐ ܒܥܐ ܕܢܐ ܡܛܐ ܡܢ ܐܟܐ:
ܩܝܡ ܟܫܐ ܐܢܐ ܥܒܕ ܡܕܝܐ ܘܐܡܐ ܡܢܐ ❊
5 ܠܐ ܐܘܐ ܕܩܝܡ ܬܪܥ ܒܕܝܢ ܟܫܝܛܐ:
ܐܠܐ ܢܥܒ ܘܥܡ ܒܥܡ ܡܢ ܒܝܬܐ ❊
ܠܐ ܐܘܐ ܕܟܫܐ ܐܡܛܐ ܒܕܝܢ ܐܡ ܟ ܡܛܐ:
ܐܠܐ ܕܡܕܐ ܘܡܢܐ ܐܡܐ ܬܐܡ ܙܐ ❊
ܐܐ ܡܕܝܢ ܠܟ ܡܝ ܕܐܬ:
10 ܐܒܐ ܐܡܐ ܐܡ ܟܐ ܐܬ ܠܐܡܟܬܘ ❊
ܡܢܐ ܥܡ ܒܢܐ ܐܡܫܛܐ ܕܘ ܟܠܚܒܐ:
ܐܒܕܐ ܒܐܘ ܡܐܡܟ ܒ ❊
ܠܐ ܒܒܥܐ ܒ ܠܐ ܐܬܐܢ:
ܡܐܫܟܟ ܒ ܐܝܕ ܒܐܘ ܙܐܠܒܐ ❊
15 ܡܕܐ ܘܐܢܐ ܐܒܐ ܥ ܫܟܐ ܠܐ ܡܐܫܟܐ:
ܘܟ ܐܒܘܐ ܐܐ ܒܐ ܕܡܕܐ ܘܐ ܐܒܐ ❊

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ܐ ܐܙܐ ܒܒ ܟܫܐ ܒܐ ܐܒܟܬܘ:
ܘܡ ܐܐܕܐ ܩܐ ܐܢܐ ܒܥܐ ܘܐܙ ❊

Consider the eagle, by far the swiftest of birds,
yet if it devours a large amount of meat, it sinks down because of it:
its wings get heavy, it plummets from its great height,
and it cannot get back up to that high elevation to which it used to ascend.
Now if even this valiant bird gets weighed down by food,
how much more will gluttonous eating weigh people down?

When someone kneads[4] together the Word of Life with food,
both body and soul profit from the splendid result.
The soul learns not to be enslaved to desires,
and the body enjoys life, without being contaminated by overeating.
The stomach gets emptied of its foods and tasty morsels,
but the Word of Life does not dissolve along with earthly things.
Fondness for one's stomach[5] was the first snare,
by which the Evil One laid a trap to entangle humans.[6]
People who battle against gluttony and subdue it
prove themselves to be godly combatants;
other snares become obvious to them so that they can leap over them,
since they forcefully trampled the one and passed beyond it.
But if fondness for the stomach and overeating win,
the person will fall, lacking the inner strength to fight.
For this is the first commandment:

[4] The term also has Eucharistic connotations, since it is commonly used for mixing and kneading the Eucharistic bread.

[5] Literally, 'love of the stomach,' i.e. intemperance and gluttony (also in line 37).

[6] See Genesis 3:1–6.

ܫܘ ܟܗ ܚܡܙܐ ܘܟܠܐ ܗܝ ܗܝ ܥܡ ܦܬܫܐ׃
ܕܐ ܫܡ ܟܐ ܚܙܐ ܐܘܐ ܐܢܐ ܗܢܐ ܟܐ ׀ 20
ܡܦܠ ܙܗ ܐ ܗܝ ܥܡ ܐܠ ܐܦܐ ܗܢ ܙܐ׃
ܐܠ ܡܙ ܬܗ ܠܠܐ ܙܐ ܘܟ ܐ ܟܐ ׀
ܐܐ ܐ ܗܝ ܢܐ ܦܐ ܗܢ ܗܟܦܚܐ׃
ܗܐ ܟܢ ܐܟ ܘܐ ܟ ܐ ܐܟ ܐܦܐ ׀
ܟ ׀ ܗܟ ܟ ܬ ׀ 25 ܗ ܗܟܦܚܐ ܕ ܫ ܐ ܬ׃
ܬܐ ܐ ܦܙ ܐ ܫ ܗ ܐ ܘܐ ܗ ׀
ܫ ܐ ܚ ܐ ܫ ܐ ܕ ܐ ܐ ׀
ܫ ܐ ܦ ܐ ܗ ܐ ܗ ܐ ׀
ܟ ܐ ܐ ܗ ܐ ܗ ܐ ׀
ܐ ׀ 30 ܐ ܟ ܬ ܐ ܐ ܗ ܐ ܐ ܗ ܬ ܐ ׀
ܕ ܐ ܗ ܐ ܐ ܐ ܗ ܐ ܐ ׀
ܐ ܐ ܐ ܗ ܐ ܐ ׀
ܐ ܐ ܐ ܐ ܐ ׀
ܐ ׀ 35 ܐ ܗ ܐ ܐ ܐ ׀
ܐ ܐ ܐ ܐ ׀
ܐ ܐ ܐ ׀
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"You shall not eat of the tree in the middle."[7]
And because they ate of it, he expelled them from the garden;[8]
since that time, we have been ever so right to fear food.
We should fear it, if it is received without thanksgiving,
or if it is eaten, yet a transgression be made to occur because of it;
or if they who eat it do not make the sign (of the cross)[9] to sanctify it,
or if they do not confess him who feeds everyone through his careful forethought.
Salt your food, O discerning one, with the Word of Life,
and season your tasty tidbits with thanksgiving!
Salt seasons your tidbits of food, but more so does
the Word of the Lord, whose flavor is sweet to those who love it.
Eve desired[10] and ate the fruit from the tree,
and because she ate it with desire[11] she died, along with her partner.
But whoever eats without desire, due to being hungry,
their eating amounts to a spiritual fast.
Morning and evening Elijah ate meat in the valley,[12]
yet the holy man's eating was devoid of desire.
The holy man was not enslaved to the desire of his stomach,
and for this reason his eating was actually an ascetical act.
Also for this reason he was fulfilling the office of a fast:

[7] Genesis 2:17.

[8] Syriac *pardaysō*, i.e. paradise. See Genesis 3:24.

[9] In this context, making 'the sign' refers to the act of making the sign of the cross over food in prayer at meal-time.

[10] In this context, the term 'desired' connotes a greedy or licentious desire, an impure passion or yearning triggering immoderate behavior. The root is used repeatedly in this context (lines 51, 52, 53, 56, 57, 60, 62, 64, 79).

[11] See Genesis 3:6.

[12] See 1 Kings 17:2–6.

40 ولا كم ٱاصكَ هج ٱسكنا وَامد حمرَحدُا٭
مكلا وُاصَحِ ٥٥ٍ ٱقص ٱنَم هج قنوَمعا:
هُبِم هَيِّد ٥ُلا وبسكلا هج هَاقَصحدُا٭
بسكلا هنُه ٱ هجدَتعصا ولا ٱەوَمدُا:
ةٍ هجدَاطُا ٥هجدَهَم حُه حصَ قَومبُنا٭
45 ةٍالُا سُدَم ةهمَبَم كُه ٥ه وُاصلا كُه:
ةٍالُا هَوِا حه٥ ٍٱ قَلا حصَلَهَكَٱه٭
هكَس هَاقَصحدُمِ اه قُنَوهُا حصَكَد سَنَا:
ةحدَه٥وَمدُا هَبِم ٱنم كَلهُنقُدُمِ٭
هَحسُا هصَبطُا كَلهُنقُدُمِ ٥سَمَ هنُه:
50 هَحدَٱه ٥هُنسُا وَسلَا لَهصُه كَبوُسم كُه٭
قَكَبِ سَهُا ةٍاصكَد هَاوُا هج ٱسكنا:
مكلا وُحنَكدُا ٱصكَبِ هَمدَبِا كَم هَٱاقُه٭
ولُا قَكدُا قِم ٱسُا وُاصلا هَهَلا وُحصَ:
هَد هَاقَصحدَٱه هَاهَد ٥هُا هِد قُ٥سُنُا٭
55 حرَحنُا ٥قُهُا هَصنُا حسَلُا لِهَلا ٱكنُا:
ةَولُا قَكدُا هَد هَاقَصحدَٱه هَبَمُا ٥٥ُا٭
لُا هصَحَبِ ٥٥ُا حَنهُا ٥ه هَبَمُا:
٥هَهَكَٱهنُا حُهنُا ٥٥ُا ٱه هَاقَصحدَٱه٭
٥هَهَكَٱهنُا قُ٥ه٥ دَهُا هصَلَا ٥٥ُا كَه:

the meat that he ate was not subject to desires.

So now you too, O discerning one, when you eat,
do not yearn[13] for additional savory tidbits.
Sanctify and eat whatever is set on the table,
not in a state of desire but in the love of discernment.
Give praise for everything, O (diner),[14] and then eat;
and once you have eaten, give thanks for your food in wonderment.
Those who dine are in need of divine help,
because in food there is cause for alarm on the part of those who receive it.
At times it is heavy and at times the body dreads it;
sometimes too much of it causes illness.
This is why the person who eats is in need of help
and of the grace to manage his provisions for him.
Also, there are times when, due to excessive eating,
the body stiffens up so that it rebels against free will.
It becomes fiery and fervid; it gets all worked up,
becoming enslaved to strange and ugly things.
For this reason, the food service[15] should proceed quickly and in an orderly fashion,
in measured portions and with thanksgiving, after which it may be taken,
without greediness, without gluttony, without desire,

[13] The term is related to the word repeatedly translated 'desire' in this context.

[14] Literally, 'O man.'

[15] 'the food service' or 'eating'; literally, 'the food.'

60 ܟܬܒ̈ܐ ܕܐܠܗܐ ܠܐ ܡܫܬܟ̈ܚ ܒܗܘ ܟܬ̈ܒ̈ܐ ܩܕ̈ܝܫ̈ܐ ܀

886 ܐܦ ܐܝܟ ܗܘܐ ܗܘ ܕܐܠܗܐ ܐܝܟ ܐܢ ܩܕ̈ܡܝܐ:

ܟܬ̈ܒ̈ܐ ܩܕ̈ܝܫ̈ܐ ܕܐܬ̈ܝܢ ܠܐ ܐܬ̈ܐܡ̈ܪ ܀

ܒܝܕ ܐܠܗܐ ܫܟܝܚ ܒܟܠ ܡܕܡ ܕܠ ܩܕ̈ܡܝܐ:

ܠܐ ܒܐ ܕܢ̈ܝܐ ܐܠܐ ܡܫܟܚ ܒܩܕ̈ܡܝܐ ܀

65 ܕܠ ܩܠ ܡܢܡ ܫܡܥ ܟ̈ܬ̈ܒ̈ܐ ܕܒ ܐܠܗ ܐܝܟ:

ܗܢ ܒܝ ܒܐܠܗ ܐܒܐ ܕܟ̈ܬ̈ܒ̈ܐ ܕܠ ܫܐܩܠ̈ܝܢ ܀

ܕܠ ܫܘܒܢܐ ܐܟ̈ܬ̈ܐ ܗܢܘ ܐܠ̈ܗ:

ܒ̈ܟ̈ܬ̈ܒ̈ܐ ܩܕ̈ܝܫ̈ܐ ܗܠܐ ܕܐ ܐܦ ܒܝ ܟ̈ܬ̈ܒ̈ܐ ܀

ܟܬ̈ܒ̈ܐ ܗܢܐ ܟܬ̈ܒ ܒܫܠ ܩܕ̈ܡܝܐ:

70 ܐܡ̈ܪ ܐ̈ܢ ܐܬ̈ܐ ܐܦ ܫܘܒܢܐ ܒ̈ܟ̈ܬ̈ܒ̈ܐ ܀

ܐܠܗ̈ܝ ܐܢ ܗܢܘ ܐ̈ܢ ܒܐܠܗܐ ܕܠ ܫܘܒܢܐ:

ܐܕܐ ܠ̈ܡܫ̈ܐ ܒ̈ܐ̈ܩ̈ܝ̈ܢ ܕܐ ܫ̈ܡ̈ܫ̈ܐ ܀

ܐܡ̈ ܐ̈ܐ ܐ̈ܫ̈ܐ ܒ̈ܟ̈ܬ̈ܒ̈ܐ ܩܕ̈ܝܫ̈ܐ:

ܫ̈ܡ̈ܫ̈ܐ ܕ̈ܐ ܒ̈ܢ̈ܝ ܒ̈ܢ̈ܝ ܕ̈ܐ ܒ̈ܐ̈ܪ̈ܥ̈ܐ ܀

75 ܐ̈ܐ̈ ܫ̈ܡ̈ܫ̈ ܐ̈ܐ̈ ܐ̈ܪ̈ ܐ̈ܐ̈ ܒ̈ܫ̈ܡ̈ܝ:

ܐ̈ܐ̈ ܡܫܬܟ̈ܚ ܠ̈ܐ̈ ܒ̈ܐ̈ ܠ̈ܐ ܫ̈ܩ̈ܦ̈ ܀

ܐ̈ܐ̈ ܐ̈ ܐ̈ ܗ̈ ܐ̈ ܒ̈ ܐ̈ ̈ ̈

and without the wild impulses of overindulgence.
The belly will take as much as you give it! Do not pile on (the food),
for it does not keep any of what it takes in, since (the food) utterly perishes.

Watch out, O discerning one—do not become a slave to wine,
for it will enslave you and dissipate you if you fall in love with it.
Once you have imbibed it and it confuses you, it reveals your secrets,
bringing out into the open anything private you may have inside.
If you are a person of modest conduct, (wine) will snatch it away from you,
diminishing you so that you mingle your laughter with that of childish people.
It besmirches the sober face with frivolity,
making even the humble person full of extreme (behaviors).
As for the person who has a battle to wage against Satan—
wine aids their enemy when they drink it.
Test yourself, and if it is harmful to you when you have drunk it,
by all means flee from ruin, O discerning one!
Do not give wine the opportunity to mock you:
set a limit on it and drink it as for the glory of your Lord.
If the wine you have drunk has impassioned you with fervor, give abundant praise!
Shout hallelujahs and amplify the melodies of your hymns!
Marvel emphatically at the Creator who made the wine—

ܐܘܠܐ ܙܩܝܦ ܟܕܡܬܬܐ ܘܠܐܫܟܚܐ܀ 80

ܟܐ ܠܐ ܐܝܬ ܠܗ ܒܪ ܡܢ ܕܐܡܪ ܟܐ: 887
ܘܠܐ ܒܥܐ ܠܐ ܢܗܘܐ ܗܟܝ ܒܫܐܪ ܐܬܪ܀
ܫܡ ܩܕܡܝܐ ܠܐ ܐܝܟ ܗܟܐ ܟܬܒܐ ܟܪܝ:
ܒܥܒܕ ܟܡ ܐܘܣܟܪܗ ܠܝ ܐܢܫܟܚܬܝ܀
ܟܠܗ ܕܐܢ ܡܐ ܒܗ ܒܥܐ ܟܡ ܐܠܗܐ ܡܠܟܐ: 85
ܒܐܪܥܐ ܕܐܫܘ ܡܐ ܒܗ ܒܥܐ ܟܕ ܩܡ ܟܐ܀
ܠܐ ܐܡܪܬ ܐܢܐ ܟܡ ܢܥܒܕ ܠܟܘ ܡܢ:
ܐܝܟ ܟܬܒܐ ܟܡ ܒܐܣܟܠܝܣ ܗܡ ܒܠܟܬܐ܀
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ܐܟܩܩܒܐ ܟܒܗ ܒܠܐ ܫܡܬܐ܀ 90
ܐܫܐ ܒܐܫ ܟܐ ܒܙܐ ܒܥܒܕ ܟܡ ܠܘܟܐ:
ܟܟܒܟܒܙܗ ܟܪܒ ܫܥܐ ܡܐ ܒܠܟܐ ܟܐ܀
ܢܐ ܐܝܟ ܟܐ ܐܫܐ ܒܟܠ ܟܡ ܐܠܟܐ ܡܠܟܐ:
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how he put into it the power to change people.
When people who are mournful drink it, they have been comforted by it;
when they who are sad taste it, it has cheered their countenance;
the hearts of troubled people rejoice when they drink it—
and all this for the glory of him who is the Creator of everything!
Let him be glorified at this table filled with plenty,
for by him all who are hungry survive, through every means possible.
Let him be blessed, who has munificently bestowed upon us all sorts of delightful things
out of his treasury that is sufficient for all, so that we live from it.
Let us extol the water in the cup and the bread at our table,
and let the wine from our vessels raise a shout of praise to him!

The End of Homily 3 on Praise at Table

ⲁⲓⲙⲟ ⲟⲙ ⲥⲟ ⲥⲗⲗⲁ ⲙⲉⲥⲕⲏ ⲕⲁⲥⲧⲁⲩⲁ⸗ 100
ⲁⲥⲗⲁ ⲁⲁⲥⲗⲗ ⲛ ⲟⲇⲁ ⲕⲟ ⲁⲏⲁⲗⲁ ⲕⲟ:
ⲁⲓⲙⲁ ⲁⲟⲙⲙⲁ ⲛ ⲩⲙⲙ ⲕⲟ ⲁⲣⲉⲥ ⲁⲕⲕⲉⲉ⸗ 888
ⲁⲓⲙⲁ ⲁⲟⲙⲟ ⲥⲃⲁ ⲕⲟⲟ ⲟⲁ ⲟⲇⲁ ⲕⲟ:
ⲟⲟⲕⲙ ⲫⲕⲙⲟ ⲁⲙ ⲁⲕⲙⲟⲙⲙ ⲟⲟ ⲥⲛⲁ ⲫⲗⲗ⸗
ⲟⲟ ⲧⲙⲁⲥⲗ ⲗⲗ ⲫⲁⲟⲁ ⲁⲙⲗⲁ ⲟⲕⲁⲗ: 105
ⲟⲛⲧⲟ ⲥⲗⲁ ⲫⲟⲟⲁ ⲟⲧⲧⲁ ⲕⲫⲗⲗ ⲁⲟⲫⲫⲧ⸗
ⲟⲟ ⲧⲗⲕⲛⲙ ⲁⲁⲟⲙⲟ ⲙⲉⲟⲕ ⲫⲗ ⲫⲗ ⲫⲟⲟⲫⲫⲧ:
ⲟⲙ ⲕⲙⲗ ⲁⲓⲟ ⲁⲕⲫⲗⲗ ⲟⲫⲙ ⲛⲥⲁ ⲟⲛⲧⲟ⸗
ⲟⲧⲧⲁ ⲕⲫⲫⲁ ⲟⲕⲙⲟⲁ ⲙⲉⲕⲥ ⲗⲗ ⲫⲁⲟⲁ:
ⲟⲙⲙⲁⲁ ⲧⲛⲁ ⲟⲙ ⲁⲩⲧⲁ ⲕⲟ ⲁⲟⲫⲙⲗⲁ⸗ 110
ⲟⲙⲙ ⲫⲁⲟⲁ ⲁⲏⲕⲁ: ⲗⲗ ⲁⲟⲫⲙⲗⲁ ⲫⲁⲟⲁ.

HOMILY 142: ON PRAISE AT TABLE 4—THE BEE AND THE ROSE

O hungry ones who are now satisfied, render praise with your tongues[1]
to the Sustainer whose treasury is filled with all sorts of good things!
O mouths that have eaten and drunk, give thanks discerningly[2]
to him who satisfies all the hungry; how generous he is!
The diners are merry—let their mouths open for thanksgiving;
the satisfied (mouth) should not be still now, as though lazy.
O you whose mouths were open, earnestly devouring food,
open them now and give praise as a discerning person!
You have drunk wine with honey and it pleased you while you sat quietly,
so speak up and repay sincere praise in a loud voice!

For your sake the Creator has given the bee
a fabulous mind, so that it may gather for you a sweet flavor.
He gave it knowledge, pouring out and filling it with expertise,
along with intelligence, discernment, and skill.
From roots, flowers, and herbs
(the bee) gleans, making a wondrous product by its expertise.
The choice produce of the bee is brought in before kings,
and the king can find no other flavor comparable to its flavor.

[1] The translation follows the reading of several manuscripts; Bedjan's text follows the reading, 'praise in your minds.'

[2] Jacob often refers to discernment, appraising it as a principal virtue granting spiritual insight.

B 142

ܒܡܟ ܒܥܟܚܘܗ ܥܢܝ ܡܟܥܕ

ܥܗܡܢܗ .ܡܡܟ.

ܒܗܘܟܗ: ܒܟܠ ܐܡܥܣܗ ܒܥܠܗܘܗ.

888

1 ܥܡܬܐ ܒܡܟܝ ܗܟܝ ܟܡ ܥܘܟܗ ܬܬܟܣܥܕ:
ܟܗܕ ܗܘܗ ܒܡܐ ܟܝܐ ܟܠ ܠܚܟܗ:
ܥܕܡܗ ܒܗܟܝ ܗܗܟܡ ܐܒܗ ܥܒܡܠܡ:

889

ܟܡܥܥܟܗ ܒܥܟܥܕ ܥܡܬܐ ܒܡܗ ܟܠܡ:

5 ܡܡܡ ܐܥܗܐ ܬܡܠܡ ܥܡܡܗ ܟܠ ܐܒܙܡܗ:
ܠܐ ܬܡܠܕܡ ܟܗ ܗܡܗ ܒܡܟ ܐܡ ܟܠܡܐ:
ܐܗ ܒܡܠܡ ܝܒܗ ܥܡܡܗ ܗܗܟܠܡ ܥܥܢܗ:
ܡܠܡܡܝ ܗܡܗ ܡܥܗ ܐܡܥܣܗܗ ܐܡ ܥܒܡܗ:
ܡܢܗ ܒܗܡܗ ܐܡܠܡ ܐܡܒ ܟܒ ܠܠܡ ܐܝ:

10 ܡܡܟܠ ܗܒܒܡ ܥܘܟܗ ܠܡܗ ܡܥܐ ܒܗ:
ܡܠܚܟܡ ܝܝܡ ܒܒܡܗ ܟܒܥܙܡܗ:
ܡܗܗ ܒܐ ܒܗܟܡ ܟܡ ܠܡܗ ܝܟܗ:
ܝܝܡ ܝܒܟܗ ܗܡܟܡ ܝܡܥܥܡܗ:
ܝܗܡܒܗ ܡܥܒܒܗ ܗܗܡܡܗ:

15 ܡܥ ܟܥܬܗ ܡܥ ܗܟܬܗ ܡܥ ܟܡܗܬܗ:
ܡܟܠܗ ܡܟܗ ܐܒܗ ܗܡܗ ܟܬܥܥܡܗ:
ܗܡܒܡ ܡܟܬܗ ܟܐ ܠܚܟܗ ܒܒܟܗ:
ܡܠܡܗ ܐܝܗ ܒܒܗ ܟܝܡܟܗ ܟܡܟܗ ܐ ܗܡ:

Without begging, borrowing, or trading,
without relocating in order to produce something,
wherever it is, in that very location (the bee) has what it needs,
and never finds it necessary to go elsewhere.
Right in front of it is located the product with which it is so diligent,
and so long as the Creator creates, (the bee) finds honey every day.
The Creator enabled it so, when he was creating (the bee),
that wherever it alights and wherever it looks, it finds honey.
Kings marvel at the construction of its house when they see it—
at its proportions, its sections, and its precise dimensions.
For neither wise men nor master builders nor carvers
calculate in ways comparable to the proportions the bee uses.
It builds rooms, fashions bodies, and closes the doors,
covering them up until they are resuscitated, after which it makes them fly.
Never does the bee labor without profit,
for at every moment it acts with confidence.
The brood flies out of the round bedchambers (the bee) has built,
and once they are empty, it gathers honey and fills them up.
Its little wings go out tirelessly through the land,
gleaning sweet produce for you, so that you may take delight in it.

But look—you are silent, indeed you are indifferent to praising,

ⲙⲡⲉ ⲛⲁ ⲛⲁⲓ ⲙⲡⲉ ⲛⲁ ⲛⲁⲓ ⲉⲧⲃⲉ:
ⲙⲡⲉ ⲛⲁ ⲛⲁⲓ ⲛⲓⲙ ⲉⲧⲣⲉ ⲡⲓⲱⲧ ⲛⲉⲙ ⲡⲓⲡⲛⲉⲩⲙⲁ⸗
ϥⲛⲁⲩ ⲙⲙⲟⲥ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ ⲛⲁⲓ ⲛⲓⲙ ⲉⲧⲣⲉ ⲡⲓⲱⲧ ⲛⲉⲙ ⲡⲓⲡⲛⲉⲩⲙⲁ:
ⲛⲁⲓ ⲛⲓⲙ ⲉⲧⲣⲉ ⲡⲓⲱⲧ ⲛⲉⲙ ⲡⲓⲡⲛⲉⲩⲙⲁ ⲛⲁⲓ ⲛⲓⲙ ⲉⲧⲣⲉ ⲡⲓⲱⲧ ⲛⲉⲙ ⲡⲓⲡⲛⲉⲩⲙⲁ⸗
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ⲁⲩⲱ ⲧⲉⲛⲁⲙⲁ ⲉⲡⲓ ⲛⲓⲙ ⲉⲧⲉ ⲡⲉ ⲧⲛⲁ ⲉⲧⲉ:
ⲁⲩⲱ ⲧⲉⲛⲁⲙⲁ ⲉⲡⲓ ⲛⲓⲙ ⲉⲧⲉ ⲡⲉ ⲧⲛⲁ ⲉⲧⲉ ⲛⲓⲙ ⲉⲧⲣⲉ ⲡⲓⲱⲧ ⲛⲉⲙ ⲡⲓⲡⲛⲉⲩⲙⲁ⸗
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ⲁⲩⲱ ⲙⲡⲉⲧⲙⲁⲩ ⲉⲣⲟⲥ ⲛⲓⲙ ⲉⲧⲣⲉ ⲡⲓⲱⲧ ⲛⲉⲙ ⲡⲓⲡⲛⲉⲩⲙⲁ⸗
ⲁⲩⲱ ⲙⲡⲉⲧⲙⲁⲩ ⲉⲣⲟⲥ ⲛⲓⲙ ⲉⲧⲣⲉ ⲡⲓⲱⲧ ⲛⲉⲙ ⲡⲓⲡⲛⲉⲩⲙⲁ:

even though the Creator takes pains every day to feed your senses:
from the sting of the bee he has supplied you with honey,
and from the thornbush he has given you the rose, whose color is lovely.
From the stems of the briar, the Maker, who is so very skillful,
has supplied beautiful flowers for your sake.
The attire of kings cannot compare to the rose in its coloring,
nor in fragrance, nor in wondrous beauty.
Consider the briar,[3] the most vile of shrubs,
yet bearing a color, the likes of which with not even kings have been clothed.
Thorns, stings, and a vile name,[4] yet it produces and provides
the rose, far prettier than precious stones.
The shrub is vile and its very name testifies to its odiousness,
but its fruit is fair and its color proclaims its comeliness.
They who pluck rose blossoms, if they are discerning,
will give high praise to him who brings all plants into existence,
as they marvel greatly at the color and the fragrance—
for what a product does the thorn extend to perfume the world!
The cedars of Lebanon are the tallest and fairest of trees,
yet they have no means of providing roses like the briar does.
The Creator of all has reserved that honor for its accomplishment,

[3] Here begins a clever study of the irony in the resonances between the terms 'briar' (*sanyō*), 'vile' (*snē* and *sanyō*), and 'odiousness' (*sanyutho*), all due to the shared root form *sn'*.

[4] Literally, 'and the name "briar"' or 'and the name "vile."'

40 ꡅ ꡊꡓꡍꡋ ꡎꡗ ꡆꡈꡓꡍꡒ ꡗꡔꡎꡎꡋꡎ꡽
ꡒꡒ ꡗꡆꡈꡗ ꡗꡗꡆꡓꡔꡋꡗ ꡗꡈꡍꡋ ꡎꡓꡒ ꡈꡍ꡽
ꡒꡒꡈꡍ ꡒꡍꡋ ꡆꡀꡆꡋ ꡎꡓꡒ ꡈꡍ ꡓꡀꡗꡗ ꡗꡔꡔꡒꡒ꡽
ꡒꡒ ꡎꡆꡀꡋꡒ ꡗꡔꡍꡋ ꡓꡆꡋ ꡔꡆꡆꡍꡗꡗ꡽
ꡒꡒꡔꡔꡎꡎꡍ ꡎꡓꡒ ꡆꡆꡗꡋ ꡗꡗꡔꡍꡋ ꡔꡔꡒꡒꡗ꡽
45 ꡆꡆꡍꡋꡍ ꡗꡒꡆꡀꡋ ꡆꡓꡗꡗꡈ ꡈꡔꡍꡈ ꡗꡗ ꡎꡒꡒ ꡆꡍ꡽
891 ꡗꡔꡗꡗ ꡆꡔꡍꡋ ꡗꡔꡗꡗ ꡆꡆꡀꡍꡋꡗ ꡔꡗꡗ ꡗꡗꡓꡗ ꡓꡍ꡽
ꡎꡒꡗ ꡆꡓ ꡆꡆꡀꡍꡋ ꡔꡒꡗꡗ ꡒꡒ ꡗꡆꡀꡗ꡽
ꡓꡔꡒꡒ ꡈꡗꡗꡋ ꡗꡔꡗꡗ ꡒꡆꡀꡀꡋ ꡆꡆꡓꡍ ꡗꡔꡔꡒꡒ꡽
ꡀꡀꡗꡋ ꡈꡗꡗꡋ ꡗꡔꡗꡗ ꡒꡆꡀꡀꡋ ꡆꡆꡓꡍ ꡗꡗꡔꡔꡒꡒ꡽
50 ꡓꡗꡗ ꡔꡆꡎꡋ ꡗꡆ ꡒꡒ ꡀꡗꡗꡗ ꡎꡎꡗꡗꡗ꡽
ꡔꡗꡗ ꡗꡆꡀꡋꡗ ꡓꡆꡆꡒ ꡒꡆꡆꡒ ꡆꡆꡗ ꡆꡀꡀ ꡔꡗꡗꡒꡒ꡽
ꡆꡆꡎꡎꡋ ꡀꡀꡗꡗ ꡆꡈꡓꡍ ꡒꡆꡆꡒ ꡆꡀꡀ ꡀꡀꡗꡗꡒꡒ꡽
ꡓꡗꡗꡋ ꡗꡒꡒꡆ ꡓꡆꡆꡒ ꡗꡗ ꡀꡗꡗꡋꡆꡆ ꡒꡒ꡽
ꡒꡒꡔꡔꡗ ꡆꡆꡎꡎꡒ ꡆꡒꡒꡋꡗꡗꡗ ꡗꡗꡀꡀꡆꡆꡗꡗ꡽
55 ꡓꡆꡆꡒ ꡈꡓꡍꡋ ꡓꡆꡆꡒ ꡗꡆꡆꡒ ꡔꡔꡒꡒꡗ ꡒꡒꡔꡔꡗ꡽
ꡗꡗꡍꡋ ꡀꡀꡗꡗ ꡒꡒꡔꡔꡗ ꡆꡆꡍꡋ ꡆꡆꡒꡒꡗ ꡆꡆꡎꡎꡒ꡽
ꡗꡗꡗꡗ ꡗꡒꡒꡋ ꡗꡆꡆꡒ ꡒꡒꡔꡔꡗ ꡆꡆ ꡀꡀꡗꡗꡒꡒ꡽
ꡓꡆꡆꡒ ꡈꡍꡋ ꡓꡆꡆꡒ ꡒꡒꡔꡔꡗ ꡆꡆꡍꡋ ꡀꡀꡗꡗꡒꡒ꡽
ꡆꡆꡎꡎꡋ ꡀꡀꡗꡗ ꡒꡒꡔꡔꡗ ꡆꡆꡍꡋ ꡀꡀꡗꡗꡒꡒ꡽

so the world will be aware that he demonstrates his power through little things.
By his skillfulness the rose originates from the thornbush,
and sublime colors come from a sprig covered with prickles;
and a tiny winged creature is made the steward of a sweet product,
that heads of nations bring in to their tables.
The insignificant wing of the bee has dumbfounded
the swift, the wise, and the industrious,
while the blooms of the rose that hang on the briar's branches
scorn the weavers of royal garments due to their own loveliness.

So you see, all sorts of creatures bustle with activity on your behalf,
yet you are devoid of praise for the Lord, your Lord!
Look—the briar bears buds and offers you its blossoms:
its fragrance for your sense of smell and its sublime color for your sight.
If you were endowed with very discerning faculties,
you would be completely incapable of ever ceasing your praise!
In the same way, the bee labors alongside you too,
gathering for you a sweet and utterly marvelous product.
It is dedicated to you and works very much on your behalf,
since the sustenance prepared by it benefits you.
All sorts of creatures adhere to a certain manner of life for your sake,

60 ⁘ ⠺⠝⠷⠓⠍ ⠹⠓⠎⠺⠕⠞⠎⠁ ⠓⠝⠁⠁ ⠍⠝⠁⠷⠓
⠓⠍ ⠹⠍ ⠙⠁⠁⠓ ⠓⠷⠓ ⠕⠺⠺⠁ ⠣⠓⠙⠝⠊⠁⠓:
⠓⠷ ⠓⠎⠓⠁ ⠺⠓⠇⠇ ⠹⠓⠷⠓⠓ ⠣⠁⠁⠓ ⠺⠓⠇⠓
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65 ⠷⠓⠷⠓ ⠓⠍⠇⠁ ⠺⠎⠓⠺⠁ ⠊⠺⠓ ⠁⠓⠁:
⠹⠇⠁ ⠓⠎⠹⠝⠇⠁ ⠷⠝⠇⠁ ⠍⠓⠓⠝⠁⠓ ⠷⠝⠇⠁ ⠓⠓⠝⠁⁘

892 ⠷⠓⠎⠁ ⠺⠓⠺⠁ ⠺⠓⠓⠁⠓⠎⠁⠷⠓ ⠺⠓⠍⠁ ⠊⠹⠝:
⠓⠊⠺⠝ ⠓⠁⠊⠁ ⠺⠓⠹⠓⠁ ⠓⠣⠝ ⠓⠓ ⠓⠓⠓⠺⠝⁘
⠓⠁ ⠁⠺⠇⠷ ⠓⠎ ⠓⠇⠁ ⠣⠝⠝⠁⠁ ⠓⠓⠍⠊⠁⠇⠁⠍:

70 ⠷⠊⠁⠓ ⠓⠷⠇⠷⠇⠊⠍ ⠓⠣ ⠊⠓⠎⠓⠍⠁⠁ ⠺⠓⠍⠁⠁ ⠓⠍⠁⠗⁘
⠓⠁ ⠇⠷⠓ ⠓⠎⠁⠁ ⠓⠓⠝⠇⠁ ⠷⠓⠎⠁ ⠁⠓⠓⠓⠝⠁ ⠓⠎⠓⠝⠊ ⠓⠎:
⠓⠎⠓⠺⠓⠎ ⠊⠎⠓⠁ ⠓⠎⠍⠊⠁⠗ ⠁⠗ ⠓⠷⠓⠁ ⠺⠓⠎⠁⁘
⠷⠊⠁⠓ ⠁⠷⠓ ⠓⠎ ⠺⠓⠓⠁⠓ ⠺⠓⠷⠓⠓ ⠓⠊⠁⠓⠎⠓⠎⠁⠁:
⠓⠷⠓⠎⠁ ⠺⠊⠇⠁ ⠓⠓⠇⠁⠁ ⠣⠓ ⠓⠓⠍⠊⠁⠁ ⠇⠁ ⠓⠎⠓⠎⠁ ⠊⠷⠓⁘

75 ⠓⠎⠁⠁ ⠊⠓⠎ ⠇⠁⠁⠁ ⠷⠓⠎⠗ ⠺⠓⠊⠁⠁⠁:
⠓⠎⠓⠎⠁⠁ ⠷⠗ ⠁⠗⠁⠁ ⠓⠷⠓⠁ ⠺⠓⠎⠁ ⠓⠷⠓⠓ ⠊⠓⠺⠁⁘
⠓⠷⠗ ⠷⠓⠎⠁⠁ ⠓⠎⠷⠓⠷⠁⠍ ⠎⠷⠓⠁⠁ ⠺⠓⠷⠁:
⠷⠗ ⠷⠓⠝ ⠎⠓⠎⠎ ⠓⠎ ⠓⠺⠓⠁⠁ ⠺⠓⠷⠓⠓ ⠷⠓⠎⁘
⠺⠓⠇⠁ ⠷⠓⠷⠓⠎ ⠎⠷⠓ ⠓⠓⠍⠊⠁⠁ ⠓⠷⠓⠎⠷⠓⠍:

in order to minister to you by their natures and their customs.
So that you would not cease in your ministry to the Godhead,
he called the creatures and appointed them to minister to you.
And behold, they stay busy for you and gather all sorts of delightful things for you,
by the fragrances and colors and sweet flavors of their natures.
Look, and marvel; breathe, and wonder; taste, and give thanks,
because the fragrance and color and sweet flavor are for you.
He has provided for you all these pleasures in accordance with the senses you possess,
so that you may be wholly delighted by his wonderful generosity.
He has provided splendid colors to gladden your sense of sight,
and he has supplied sweet fragrance to gratify your sense of smell;
flavor for your palate and sweet sounds for your sense of hearing,
and for your fingers, the sense of touch so that you may grasp whatever they need to hold.[5]

Now, to the one who gives you these fair things, repay
sounds of praise from your lips in exchange for these senses!
Give thanks because you have eaten, give praise because you have drunk, and sing hallelujah because you have enjoyed it;
return thanksgiving for this feast brimming over with fine things!
The people[6] rejected the food they had in the wilderness,
and while they were eating they did not sing praise, for they were ungrateful.
They ate manna yet kept complaining against the provider;[7]

[5] Literally, 'so that you may grasp all its objects.'

[6] Like other Syriac writers, Jacob uses 'the people' with reference to Israel in scripture.

[7] See Exodus 16.

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ܡܐ ܕܫܬܘܐ ܐܥܡܥܡ ܀
ܘܐ ܘܗܠܟ ܟܡ ܕܠܐ ܟܡ ܟܣܡܬ׃
ܕܙܡܐ ܥܝܕܐ ܠܐܥܡܐ ܫܟܐ ܘܥܡܬܐ ܀
ܫܘ ܐܘܐܘܐ ܐܙܓ ܐܚܝ ܐܘܐ׃ 85
ܘܟܟܡ ܙܡܐ ܥܝܕܐ ܠܐܥܡܐ ܫܟܐ ܀
ܟܡܫܟ ܩܝܡ ܘܐܡ ܟܡ ܫܘ ܟܡ ܟܠܐ ܟܣܡܬ׃
ܘܟܡ ܐܥܡܡ ܗܝ ܡܥܡܡ ܘܟܐ ܐܘܐ׃ 893
ܫܘ ܟܡܐܡ ܩܒܠܐ ܡܥܬܐ ܘܣܘܐ׃
ܫܘ ܡܥܡܡ ܟܐ ܕܡܥܡ ܙܡܐ ܫܟܐ ܘܡܟܡ ܟܐ ܀ 90
ܕܡܟ ܠܐܥܐ ܐܩܐ ܣܟܐ ܙܒ ܡܥܡܟܡ׃
ܐܕܙܟܡ ܩܥܐ ܘܐܟܡ ܟܠܐ ܙܩܐܘ ܀
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ܡܟܬ ܡܐܕܐ ܕܐ ܐܟܘܐ ܘܡܡܐܡ ܀
ܐܘܐ ܙܐܕܐ ܡܐܥܐ ܟܟܐ ܙܡ׃ 95
ܗܙ ܐܘܙܐ ܣܟ ܡܐܟ ܘܐ ܟܐ ܟܐ ܀
ܕܐܥ ܠܟܡ ܘܐ ܕܐ ܡܐܟܐ ܩܕܐ ܙܐ׃
ܐܟ ܐܠܐ ܘܐ ܠܐ ܡܣ ܘܐ ܘܟܐ ܘܐ ܀
ܐܠܐ ܫܐ ܐܡܕܩ ܘܐ ܟܠܐ ܐܟܐ׃

they drank water from the rock[8] yet kept murmuring.
Quail in heaps on their tables, and still they were not thankful!
Do not be like them; instead, sing praise when you eat.
O Lord, allow us to give thanks each day for your generosity!
O Good One who has provided us with all good things, to you be praise!

The End of Homily 4 on Praise at Table

[8] See Exodus 17:6. The poet uses a less common term for 'rock' here (*tarōnō*), the same that occurs in the Peshitta.

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⠞⠓⠁⠝⠁ ⠓⠑⠉⠞⠕⠗ ⠉⠁⠀ ⠋⠁⠙⠺⠁⠀ ⠁⠇⠁ ⠞⠓⠕⠺⠁⠀
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HOMILY 143: ON PRAISE AT TABLE 5—FRUITS OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

Now that the body has partaken of good things pertaining to it,
come, let us give something pertinent to the soul, so that it may be refreshed as well!
We have eaten bread;[1] let us listen to the Word full of life,
since bread is for the body and the Word is for refreshing the soul.
See—our table sits prepared, filled with all sorts of pleasant things,
but if the Word of Life is lacking, there is no feast.
Indeed, a feast consists of bread, water, and the Word of Life,
by which banquet preparations are finished and stand complete, lacking nothing.
Arise, O Instruction,[2] and present yourself at the table,
and mix your fine wine as well, that it may refresh us!
Look—the attendants are hurrying to bring in tasty morsels of food;
you also, bring your sweet flavor to those who love you!
Some here ravenously hunger for bread and wine,
but there are others, who discerningly[3] seek you.
Do not let it irk you, O you who speak amidst unruly people,
for some are attentive and thirstily crave that you should mix (your wine) for them.

[1] 'Bread' or 'food.' The term 'bread' is often used generally to mean 'food.'

[2] Jacob personifies Instruction or Teaching, as an actor in the liturgy or a guest at the table.

[3] Jacob often refers to discernment, appraising it as a principal virtue granting spiritual insight.

B 143

ܘܡܢ ܒܬܪ ܕܢܦܫ ܐܢܫ ܕܡܬ
ܘܐܡܪ ܠܗ ܡܫܝܚܐ.
ܘܫܒܩܐ: ܘܟܠ ܐܚܬܫܐ ܘܩܐܘܢ.

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1 ܐܩܐ ܒܥܠ ܩܝܢ ܘܡܢ ܗܘ ܠܬܠܐ:
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ܒܩܕܝ ܟܫܐ ܢܥܥ ܗܕܐ ܘܩܕܫ ܫܬܐ:
ܘܟܫܐ ܘܩܝܢ ܒܐ ܗܕܐ ܘܬܐ ܘܐܚܥ ܕܐ܀
5 ܐܐ ܩܩܘ ܥܡܥ ܐܠܐ ܓܠ ܕܗܩܓ:
ܒܠ ܗܘ ܗܕܐ ܘܫܐ ܫܥܢ ܟܕ ܐܩܘܐ ܒܝ܀
ܐܐ ܐܩܘܐ ܟܫܐ ܗܬܐ ܗܟܡ ܫܐ:
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ܩܡ ܫܚܐ ܗܐ ܢܥܡ ܟܠ ܩܩܘ:
10 ܐܡܒ ܐ ܐܝܡ ܫܡܢ ܠܐ ܘܚܥ ܟ܀
ܐ ܡܥܥܩ ܘܓܫ ܗܡ ܟܠܩܩ:
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ܐܡ ܘܟܟܫ ܫܡܐ ܗܫ ܩܩ:
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15 ܠ ܐܠ ܟ ܐ ܘܥܟܟ ܩܡ ܩܝܩ
ܒܡ ܒܫ ܘܘ ܐ ܐܡ ܡܝ ܘܐܝܡ ܐܡ ܟ܀

Discerning ones, hear the Word of Life that is teeming with benefits,
for it is like food to those who are hungry, so that they are refreshed by it.
"Admonish in season and out of season," Paul wrote;[4]
so also here, I will now give admonition to those who listen to me,
because for the Word of Life, there is no time that is not the right time,
nor any season in which it is impermissible to speak it.
Inside the churches, in the congregations, and within the monasteries;
in the market places, in the houses, and at the table it should be spoken.
Laden with benefits, full of life, and bold,
when its voice is raised, it summons its guests for the sake of imparting life to them.
Come and be refreshed by the banquet preparations that are full of life,
and pluck now the sweet and spiritual fruits!
Where is the person who has eaten? Where is the person who has drunk? Where is the person who has found refreshment?
Where are the generations that have passed away with their times?
Where are all the feasts of all the rich people,
who along with the beggars have been turned into mud in Sheol?
Where are the princes of the world, who "grew fat and kicked,"[5]
for look—their mouths are shut and they cling to the dust there (in Sheol)?

[4] See 2 Timothy 4:2.

[5] See Deuteronomy 32:15.

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ⲛⲓⲙ ⲉⲧⲟⲩⲛ ⲉⲡⲓⲕⲟⲥⲙⲟⲥ ⲛⲓⲙ ⲛⲓⲁⲣⲭⲱⲛ ⲛⲓⲙ ⲛⲓⲁⲅⲁⲑⲟⲥ⸗ 20
ⲛⲓⲙ ⲛⲓⲁⲅⲅⲉⲗⲟⲥ ⲙⲡⲓⲥⲁⲛⲁⲥⲧⲁⲥⲓⲁ ⲙⲙⲟⲥ ⲛⲁⲓ ⲉⲧⲃⲉ ⲡⲓⲙⲁ ⲉⲧⲙⲁⲣⲉ ⲡⲓⲣⲱⲙⲉ:
ⲛⲓⲙ ⲛⲓⲁⲅⲅⲉⲗⲟⲥ ⲛⲓⲙ ⲛⲓⲁⲣⲭⲏ ⲛⲓⲉⲝⲟⲩⲥⲓⲁ ⲛⲓⲁⲅⲁⲑⲟⲥ⸗
ⲛⲓⲙ ⲛⲓⲁⲅⲅⲉⲗⲟⲥ ⲙⲡⲓⲥⲁⲛⲁⲥⲧⲁⲥⲓⲁ ⲙⲙⲟⲥ ⲛⲁⲓ ⲉⲧⲃⲉ ⲡⲓⲙⲁ ⲉⲧⲙⲁⲣⲉ ⲡⲓⲣⲱⲙⲉ:
ⲛⲓⲙ ⲛⲓⲁⲅⲅⲉⲗⲟⲥ ⲛⲓⲙ ⲛⲓⲁⲣⲭⲏ ⲛⲓⲉⲝⲟⲩⲥⲓⲁ ⲛⲓⲁⲅⲁⲑⲟⲥ⸗
ⲡⲓⲕⲁⲧⲁⲕⲗⲩⲥⲙⲟⲥ ⲙⲡⲓⲥⲁⲛⲁⲥⲧⲁⲥⲓⲁ ⲙⲙⲟⲥ ⲛⲁⲓ ⲉⲧⲃⲉ ⲡⲓⲙⲁ ⲉⲧⲙⲁⲣⲉ ⲡⲓⲣⲱⲙⲉ: 25
ⲛⲓⲙ ⲛⲓⲁⲅⲅⲉⲗⲟⲥ ⲛⲓⲙ ⲛⲓⲁⲣⲭⲏ ⲛⲓⲉⲝⲟⲩⲥⲓⲁ ⲛⲓⲁⲅⲁⲑⲟⲥ⸗
ⲛⲓⲙ ⲛⲓⲁⲅⲅⲉⲗⲟⲥ ⲙⲡⲓⲥⲁⲛⲁⲥⲧⲁⲥⲓⲁ ⲙⲙⲟⲥ ⲛⲁⲓ ⲉⲧⲃⲉ ⲡⲓⲙⲁ ⲉⲧⲙⲁⲣⲉ ⲡⲓⲣⲱⲙⲉ:
ⲛⲓⲙ ⲛⲓⲁⲅⲅⲉⲗⲟⲥ ⲛⲓⲙ ⲛⲓⲁⲣⲭⲏ ⲛⲓⲉⲝⲟⲩⲥⲓⲁ ⲛⲓⲁⲅⲁⲑⲟⲥ⸗
ⲛⲓⲙ ⲛⲓⲁⲅⲅⲉⲗⲟⲥ ⲙⲡⲓⲥⲁⲛⲁⲥⲧⲁⲥⲓⲁ ⲙⲙⲟⲥ ⲛⲁⲓ ⲉⲧⲃⲉ ⲡⲓⲙⲁ ⲉⲧⲙⲁⲣⲉ ⲡⲓⲣⲱⲙⲉ: 30
ⲛⲓⲙ ⲛⲓⲁⲅⲅⲉⲗⲟⲥ ⲛⲓⲙ ⲛⲓⲁⲣⲭⲏ ⲛⲓⲉⲝⲟⲩⲥⲓⲁ ⲛⲓⲁⲅⲁⲑⲟⲥ⸗
ⲛⲓⲙ ⲛⲓⲁⲅⲅⲉⲗⲟⲥ ⲙⲡⲓⲥⲁⲛⲁⲥⲧⲁⲥⲓⲁ ⲙⲙⲟⲥ ⲛⲁⲓ ⲉⲧⲃⲉ ⲡⲓⲙⲁ ⲉⲧⲙⲁⲣⲉ ⲡⲓⲣⲱⲙⲉ:
ⲛⲓⲙ ⲛⲓⲁⲅⲅⲉⲗⲟⲥ ⲛⲓⲙ ⲛⲓⲁⲣⲭⲏ ⲛⲓⲉⲝⲟⲩⲥⲓⲁ ⲛⲓⲁⲅⲁⲑⲟⲥ⸗

Where are the glorious banquets of the rulers,
whose memories have ceased, along with their names, having come to nothing?
Generations have passed, and kings and dominions have passed,
along with all the mighty, all the strong, and all the powerful.
Little by little, over the crossing, one after the other,
they are obliged to depart by way of the great bridge.[6]

You also, who presently have plenty of time to refresh yourself,
remember the very same end is going to befall you,
so crave the feast of the new age,[7]
seeking the things to come that shall be given to you.
Behold, at the gates stands the Messiah[8] in someone who is needy:
go out and give him bread and wine from your table.
And once you have given it to him, he will keep it for you and repay you
in that imperishable kingdom, just as he promised.[9]
Do not labor for food that spoils, like hard-working people,
yet forget the table of life, like lazy people!
Let us graze on the Word as though on a meadow full of life,
on which the soul dines, getting fat and obtaining fine things.
Let us not delight only in (physical) foods like the beasts,
for where they eat they are not moved to give praise.

[6] The imagery of a bridge by which one crosses to/from Sheol occurs also in Ephrem the Syrian (*Hymns on Faith* 6:17; 17:11; *Homily on Our Lord* 4).

[7] 'Age' or 'world.' The term can have either meaning.

[8] See Revelation 3:20.

[9] See Matthew 25:31–46.

35 ܐܡܐ ܐܢܐ ܫܡܥܬܐ ܘܟܬܒܬܐ:
ܐܠܗܐ ܕܐܠܗܐ ܐܘܬܪܐ ܕܫܡܝܢ ܘܕܥܡܐ ܫܪܝܪ̈ܐ
ܘܐ ܕܟܝ ܐܬܐ ܕܟܬܒ ܡܬܬܐ:
ܡܢ ܟܝܬܐ ܡܢ ܟܬܒ ܟܬܒܬܐ ܘܟܬܒܬܐ
ܕܡܠܐ ܕܡܠܐ ܕܡܠܐ ܕܡܠܐ ܕܡܠܐ ܕܡܠܐ ܕ 896
40 ܐ ܪܘܡ ܐ ܟܝ ܐܢܐ ܐܟ ܟܬܒܬ
ܐ ܐܝ ܐܡ ܐܡ ܐܠܐ ܐܢܐ ܟܬܒܬ:
ܡܡ ܐܡ ܐ ܟ ܟ ܟ ܟ ܐܠܐ ܘܟܬ
ܐܠܐܪ̈ܟ ܟ ܟ ܟ ܐ ܐ ܘܟܬ ܫ ܐ:
ܐ ܟ ܐ ܟ ܟ ܟ ܟ ܟ
45 ܐ ܟ ܐ ܐ ܫ ܡ ܟ ܘ:
ܐ ܐ ܐ ܟ ܟ ܟ ܐ ܐ ܟ ܐ
ܡ ܐ ܟ ܟ ܟ ܟ ܟ ܟ ܟ:
ܐ ܐ ܐ ܐ ܐ ܐ ܐ ܐ ܐ
ܐ ܟ ܐ ܐ ܐ ܐ ܐ ܐ ܐ:
50 ܐ ܐ ܐ ܐ ܐ ܐ ܐ ܐ
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Tasty fruits have come to us off of the trees;
let us also give the fruits of praise from our tongues.
Look—through their clusters the vines of the vineyard are coaxing us
to pluck every thanksgiving from our lips and offer them!
Indeed, the apple with its sweet fragrance will pick a quarrel with us,
if we do not return praise for it once we have eaten it.
O you[10] who have eaten fruit from the tree,
you are a tree, so you too ought to produce your own fruits![11]
Do not yearn for all the produce and devour it,
without supplying the fruits of praise that you possess in abundance.
You have fruits, and they are loftier than that of trees,
along with choice produce fit for a king's table.
You have a mouth. Why are you destitute of praise?
Speak, and pluck the sweet fruits from your lips!
Shake[12] and drop the gifts of praise from your tongue,
offer worshipful produce and present it to your Lord the king.
The Father has planted you and watered you[13] with the blood of his Son and made you grow,
and the Spirit of God has forged within you the fruits of faith.[14]
By the blessed stream of baptism your roots are laid,
and you drink from the spring that the lance[15] opened up.

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[10] Literally, 'person.'

[11] See Matthew 7:17–18.

[12] The image is that of a tree shaken to drop its fruit for harvesting.

[13] See Psalm 1:3; Jeremiah 17:8.

[14] See Galatians 5:22–23.

[15] In Syriac tradition, the figure of 'the lance' (*rumḥo*) was at the heart of a rich and complex network of associations that typologically linked the piercing of Jesus' side on the cross (John 19:34), the opening of Adam's side from which Eve was taken (Genesis 2:21–22), the lance prophesied to pierce the soul of Mary, the second Eve (Luke 2:35), and the fiery sword preventing humanity's return to paradise (Genesis 3:24). The piercing of Jesus' side opens the doorway back to paradise; the subsequent nourishing flow of blood and water symbolizes Baptism and Eucharist, so that the church is thereby born out of the side of the second Adam, Jesus Christ.

55 ⲓⲁⲁ ⲕⲉ ϥⲁⲱⲁ ⲫⲙⲟⲩⲥⲁ ⲙⲛ ⲁⲙⲏⲧⲁ:
ⲧⲙⲛ ⲛⲥⲉ ϥⲁⲱⲁ ⲫⲫⲁⲏⲥⲁ ⲙⲛ ⲕⲙⲟⲧⲁ⸗
ⲝⲉⲁⲧⲁ ⲫⲛⲁⲁ ⲁⲁ ⲙⲝⲉⲧⲟⲩ ⲕⲉ ⲕⲙⲝⲉⲕⲏⲧⲁⲙ:
ⲫⲧⲙⲝⲁⲙ ⲧⲙⲛ ⲝⲙⲛ ⲁⲁⲫⲩⲙⲁ ⲙⲛ ⲙⲁⲁⲩⲁ⸗
ⲁⲁ ⲥⲱⲁⲫⲁ ⲏⲛⲙⲙ ⲥⲏⲏⲙⲁ ⲩⲣⲁ ⲏⲝⲝ:
60 ⲁⲁⲁ ⲧⲙⲏⲁⲙ ⲫⲏⲏⲙⲁ ⲙⲏⲝⲝⲟⲩⲉ ⲁⲁ ⲫⲁⲏⲏⲙⲏⲟⲩⲉ⸗

897 ⲁⲁ ⲏⲛⲁⲁ ⲫⲁⲏⲝ ⲝⲁⲱⲁ ⲙⲛ ⲁⲙⲏⲧⲁ:
ⲁⲙⲏⲧⲁ ⲁⲉⲙ ⲥⲁⲁ ⲁⲁ ⲁⲉⲙ ⲝⲁⲱⲁ ⲫⲙⲟⲩ⸗
ⲗⲁ ⲁⲁⲙⲏ ⲏⲝ ⲁⲧⲟⲧⲁ ⲁⲁⲁⲫⲝⲁ ⲁⲧⲛ:
ⲁⲁⲉⲙ ⲗⲁ ⲁⲁⲝ ⲝⲁⲱⲁ ⲫⲫⲁⲏⲥⲁ ⲫⲫⲏⲁⲙ ⲕⲟ⸗
65 ⲁⲙⲙ ⲕⲟ ⲝⲁⲱⲁ ⲁⲁⲫⲁⲙ ⲁⲧⲛ ⲙⲛ ⲫⲁⲙⲏⲧⲁ:
ⲁⲁⲟⲁ ⲏⲧⲏⲁ ⲫⲧⲏⲏⲩⲁⲁ ⲁⲁⲫⲁⲏⲥⲁ ⲥⲫⲏⲁ⸗
ⲁⲙⲙ ⲕⲟ ⲫⲟⲫⲁ ⲏⲫⲫⲁ ⲧⲫⲫⲙⲁ ⲁⲉⲙ ⲙⲛ ⲁⲫⲫⲥⲁⲁ:
ⲫⲝⲝⲁ ⲁⲙⲫⲩⲁⲁ ⲝⲁⲱⲁ ⲥⲏⲧⲁ ⲙⲛ ⲫⲫⲁⲏⲩⲁ⸗
ⲙⲁⲫⲁ ⲁⲁⲁⲩ ⲫⲙⲧⲁ ⲫⲫⲁⲏⲥⲁ ⲙⲛ ⲕⲙⲁⲩ:
70 ⲁⲁⲫⲁⲧ ⲁⲁ ⲕⲁ ⲁⲁⲁ ⲫⲫⲁⲏⲥⲁ ⲏⲫⲫⲏⲁⲁ ⲁⲁⲩⲁ⸗
ⲣⲣⲟⲩ ⲁⲁⲁ ⲁⲁⲫⲁⲏⲁ ⲫⲩⲙⲁ ⲏⲃⲁⲁ ⲫⲧⲁⲁ:
ⲁⲁⲫⲁⲥ ⲁⲙⲏⲁⲁ ⲥⲫⲝ ⲕⲟ ⲝⲁⲱⲁ ⲫⲫⲁⲁⲙⲁⲁⲁ⸗
ⲏⲙⲫⲁ ⲫⲁⲏⲁⲁ ⲫⲫⲫⲫⲁⲩⲁⲁ ⲙⲙ ⲏⲁⲁⲩ:
ⲁⲫⲙ ⲙⲏⲏⲁⲁ ⲫⲁⲏⲏⲁⲁ ⲩⲁⲏⲁ ⲁⲁⲁⲁ ⲁⲉⲙ⸗

The Tree of Life[16] has made you its sibling, so you may grow with it;
bring the fruits of praise to your Lord discerningly.
Your fruits are better than those from trees:
clusters of praise from righteous lips.
Do not let the vines embarrass you by the beauty of their clusters,
nor the trees by the colors and fragrance of their produce.
For if you wish to present the fruits of righteousness,
you are able to present them, just like the blessed garden[17] of Eden.[18]
You have fruits and you have leaves, as it is written,
"the fruits will be to eat and the leaves for healing."[19]
The fruits are deeds and the leaves are faithful words.
Demonstrate these virtues, for they are more sublime than (the fair fruits) of trees.
Produce what you have and give spiritual refreshment,
and you will have no need of trees and their fruits.
You have virtues, so that if they are kept safe from harm,
your virtue will strive to imitate that of the Tree of Life.
So then, as you eat fruits from (physical) trees,
be careful to make these fruits of yours virtuous.[20]
Be competitive with the vine that supplies the lovely grapes,
and outdo it in supplying exceptional praise from your lips.

[16] See Genesis 2:9 (also in line 90).

[17] Syriac *pardaysō* ('garden'), i.e. paradise.

[18] See Genesis 2:8.

[19] See Ezekiel 47:12 (cf. Revelation 22:2).

[20] 'Virtuous' or 'fair.' The root meaning 'fair, lovely, virtuous,' and 'beauty, virtue' occurs repeatedly in lines 86–99.

ܐܟܝ ܡܬܐ ܟܬܒ ܐܝܣܘܥ ܠܐܘܓ ܟܠܗ: 75
ܐܠܐ ܩܐܠ ܒܥܟܣ ܟܠܢ ܦܢܗܠܐ܂
ܩܐܠ ܘܟܘ ܠܟܝ ܐܢ ܗܝ ܘܐܟܬ:
ܗܝܩܟ ܥܟܣ ܗܝ ܗܩܢܐ ܒܢܒܥܐ܂
ܠܐ ܣܥܒܢܘ ܟܩܢܐ ܟܥܟܗܢ ܒܗܝܟܬܗ:
ܗܠ ܐܟܬ ܟܝܬ ܡܙܟ ܗܩܢܐ ܒܢܒܥܐ܂ 80
ܒܐ ܪܟ ܐܝܟ ܒܐܐ ܩܐܠ ܒܢܒܥܐ:
ܐܟ ܟܘ ܐܐ ܐܟ ܩܢܒܥ ܟܢ ܒܟ ܒܟ܂ 898
ܐܟ ܟܘ ܩܐܠ ܗܐܟ ܟܘ ܠܩ ܐܟ ܒܟܡ:
ܩܐܠ ܟܩܐ ܗܠܐܥܢܐ ܠܩ ܢܗ܂
ܩܐܠ ܟܩܐ ܠܩ ܐܠ ܩܢ ܢܠ ܐܠ 85
ܗܟܟ ܣܐ ܥܗ ܒܙܟ ܗܝ ܘܐܟܬ܂
ܗܟܟ ܘܟܘ ܐܩ ܟܩ ܙܡܣܐܟ:
ܗܠ ܩܟܐ ܟܐ ܟ ܐܟܬ ܗܟ ܩܐܠ܂
ܐܟ ܟܘ ܥܗ ܒܐ ܐܠ ܩܟܐܢ ܗܝ ܢܢܬ:
ܟܐܟ ܣܬ ܡܩ ܥܗ ܟܥܒܢ܂ 90
ܢܒ ܩܐܠ ܢܐ ܐܠ ܐܝ ܗܝ ܐܟܬ:
ܗܟ ܩܐܠ ܘܟ ܣܒ ܐܩ ܐܢ܂
ܣܩ ܟܩܐ ܟܬ ܢܐ ܥܩ ܒܢ ܐ:
ܗ ܟ ܩ ܢ ܥ ܩ ܗ ܝ ܩ ܐ ܢ ܗ ܐ ܒ ܐ ܩ ܐ ܠ ܐ ܢ ܐ ܗ

Marvel, O discerning one, at the color and fragrance of the produce,
and let the sound of thanksgiving drift up from you like sweet aromas!
Pay no attention to the (physical) trees and the tasty tidbits of their produce,
and become yourself a tree full of virtues.
Fervently produce the fruits of praise from your lips,
and let the sound of thanksgiving be spoken by you in great wonder.
From the foods that have been prepared for you on the table,
take your impetus for being moved to offer praise in a discerning fashion.
On all occasions, by all means, and in all generations,
give thanks to your Lord for all these things. Praise be to him!

The End of Homily 5 on Praise at Table

95 ⲁⲓⲁ ϥⲛⲁϩⲙⲁ ⲉⲣⲟⲩⲛ ⲛⲁϣⲙⲏ ⲛⲁⲓ ⲛⲉⲧⲟⲩⲧⲁ:
ⲛⲧⲉⲩⲙⲛ̀ⲧⲣⲙⲛ̀ⲧⲣ ⲙⲡⲉ ⲁⲡⲁⲣⲁⲓⲁ ⲁⲛ ⲛⲧⲉϥϩⲁ⸗
ⲉⲣⲉ ⲡⲁⲓⲱⲧ ⲛⲉⲕⲕⲗⲏⲣⲟⲛⲟⲙⲓⲁ ⲛⲉⲧⲟⲩⲧⲁⲙⲟ:
ⲛⲁⲓ ⲙⲡⲉⲕⲣⲁⲛ ⲛⲧⲉ ⲁⲓⲱⲧ ⲛⲧⲉ ⲡⲓⲱⲧ ⲉϩⲟⲩⲛ⸗
ⲛⲁⲩⲁⲛ ⲛⲁⲓ ⲉⲣⲱϥ ⲛⲁⲓ ⲛⲉⲙ ⲛⲉⲛⲥⲟⲛ ⲙⲡⲉⲛⲓⲱⲧ:
100 ⲛⲧⲉⲙⲡⲕⲁⲕⲓⲁ ⲙⲡⲉ ⲁⲡⲁⲣⲁⲓⲁ ⲉⲛⲁⲩⲓ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ⸗
ⲛⲉⲙ ⲛⲁⲓⲁⲅⲅⲉⲗⲟⲥ ⲛⲉⲙⲁⲣⲭⲏ ⲙⲡⲉ ⲙⲛ ⲟⲩⲁⲛⲁⲅⲕⲏ:
ⲛⲁⲓ ⲙⲡⲉ ⲙⲛⲧⲁⲓⲟ ⲛⲁⲣⲭⲱⲛ ⲛⲧⲉⲛⲓⲱⲧ⸗
899 ⲉⲃⲟⲗ ⲧⲏⲣϥ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ ⲛⲧⲉⲛⲉⲕⲕⲗⲏⲥⲓⲁ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ ⲙⲡⲉⲛⲥⲱⲙⲁ:
ⲙⲡⲉⲛⲛⲟⲩⲥ ⲁⲛⲱⲓ ⲛⲧⲉⲛⲯⲩⲭⲏ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ ⲙⲙⲟⲥ ⲛⲁⲓ ⲛⲁⲣⲭⲱⲛ⸗
ⲙⲙⲁⲩ ⲉⲣⲁⲧⲟⲩ ⲙⲛⲉⲛⲓⲱⲧ ⲙⲛ ⲛⲁⲣⲭⲱⲛ ⲛⲧⲉⲛⲓⲱⲧ.

HOMILY 144: ON PRAISE AT TABLE 6—THE LUSH MEADOWS OF SCRIPTURE

Feed[1] us, Lord, and refresh us by your gift,
through your instruction fatten us spiritually.
Along with the food, give us your Word that we may meditate on it,
for its taste is far sweeter than honey[2] from the comb.[3]
As you have sustained us now so that we enjoy these physical delights,
preserve the spiritual ones for us there, for the sake of your love.
We ardently beseech you, O Lord, for the favors of those tasty morsels,
since the soul cannot have life[4] except through you.
Make us dwell[5] in lush meadows[6] that we may graze in them,

[1] Here the word translated 'feed' has the connotation of tending a grazing flock.

[2] See Psalm 19:10; 119:103.

[3] Parallel wording occurs at the opening of Jacob's homily, *On the Partaking of the Holy Mysteries*, line 2. At several points, the two homilies share vivid imagery and thematic resonances, e.g. compare *On the Partaking of the Holy Mysteries*, lines 18, 26, 35–36, 46, and 87 with *PT* 6, lines 32, 24 and 37, 25–26, 41–44, and 64, respectively. See Amir Harrak, trans., *Jacob of Sarug's Homily on the Partaking of the Holy Mysteries* (Texts from Christian Late Antiquity 19; Piscataway, N.J.: Gorgias, 2013).

[4] 'Life' or 'salvation.' The term may have either meaning in many of its occurrences in this homily (e.g. lines 12, 22, 30, 32, 62, 64, 70, 86).

[5] 'Dwell' or 'rest.' The word may have either meaning.

[6] Literally 'in meadows of strength.' The expression occurs in the Peshitta version of Psalm 23:2. The image pervades the last half of this homily (lines 64, 69, 73, 75, 78, 88, 104).

B 144

ܘܡܢ ܕܐܬܝ ܠܗ ܒܥܠ ܒܝܬܐ ܘܢܦܩ
ܠܐ ܢܗܘܐ ܠܗ ܐܠܐ ܒܝܬ ܐܒܘܗܝ.
ܘܐܝ ܕܠܐ ܢܫܬܟܚ ܠܗ ܐܠܐ ܒܝܬ ܐܒܘܗܝ.

899

1 ܘܐܢ ܟܕ ܡܢ ܒܝܬ ܐܒܘܗ ܢܦܩ ܐܢ ܠܐ ܢܫܬܟܚ ܠܗ
ܐܠܐ ܒܝܬ ܐܒܘܗܝ ܐܘ ܒܝܬ ܐܡܗ ܟܕ ܐܝܬ ܠܗ ܫܡܐ ܕܒܪܘܬܐ
ܥܡ ܐܚܬܗ ܐܘ ܐܒܝܗ ܐܘ ܒܪܬܗ ܐܘ ܒܪܗ ܕܐܚܝܗ
ܐܘ ܐܚܬ ܐܒܘܗ ܐܘ ܐܡ ܐܒܝܗ ܐܘ ܒܪܬ ܐܚܘܗ
ܐܠܐ ܒܥܠ ܒܝܬ ܐܒܘܗ ܐܘ ܐܡ ܐܒܝܗ ܐܘ ܒܪܬ ܐܚܘܗ
5 ܐܘ ܒܥܠ ܒܝܬ ܐܡ ܐܘ ܐܒ ܐܒܝܗ ܐܘ ܒܪܬ ܐܚܬ ܐܒܘܗ
ܘܠܐ ܢܫܬܟܚ ܐܝܟ ܕܐܡ ܢܫܟܚ ܫܘܚܪ
ܒܗ ܒܝܬ ܐܒܘܗ ܐܘ ܒܝܬ ܐܡܗ ܐܘ ܒܝܬ ܐܚܝܗ
ܐܠܐ ܐܢ ܚܪ ܫܬܐ ܕܟܬܒܘ ܠܐ ܢܫܟܚܘܢ
ܕܢܬܟ ܒܟܬܒܐ ܐܝܟ ܐܡܐ ܕܒܫܘܪ ܬܒܐ

and let us drink of the living and divine waters.
Turn our souls away[7] from the stumbling blocks of the wicked world,
and lead us to walk in the way of life.
Your name will accompany us like a warrior through the fearful abyss,[8]
allowing us to cross over the country of dread to the royal palace.
As long as you are with us, should even death happen to meet us,
it cannot fluster us, for we know you are the resurrection.[9]
Your beloved Son is a straight rod; he comforts us[10]
from the injuries the serpent has inflicted upon our generations.[11]
The staff of Jesse has brought forth a stem full of branches,[12]
and now the entire creation sits in its pleasant shade.
The Virgin vine produced a cluster whose wine is sweet,
one now being quaffed in the four quarters of the world as the medicine of life.
This vine, that was not cultivated by a farmer in any way,
whose wine seeped down to the land of the dead and roused them—
from that new wine that poured forth on Golgotha[13]
the world has drunk, and by it all those who mourn have been comforted.
Look—tables are prepared on the earth in the presence of sinners,[14]
and off of them diners consume life spiritually every day:
bread[15] for their bodies and the Word of Life for their souls,

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[7] 'Turn our souls away' or 'Restore our souls.' The expression may have either meaning in this context (see Psalm 23:3).

[8] See Psalm 23:3.

[9] See John 11:24.

[10] See Psalm 23:4.

[11] See Genesis 3:1–19.

[12] See Isaiah 11:1.

[13] See John 19:34.

[14] See Psalm 23:5.

[15] 'Bread' or 'food.' The term 'bread' is often used generally to mean 'food.'

10 ܐܬܥܒܕ ܗܘܐ ܡܢ ܫܘܠܛܢܐ܀

900 ܐܝܟ ܕܥܒܝ ܒܐܡܪܐ ܘܟܬܒ ܣܦܪ:
ܗܘܐ ܒܫ ܟܠ ܫܘܢܝ ܘܡܢ ܒܗܟܠ ܕܘ܀
ܒܪ ܬܪܝܢ ܟܠ ܐܢ ܫܠܝܛܐ ܕܠܐ ܒܝܫܠ:
ܐܦ ܢܬܢ ܟܠ ܐܝܢܐ ܒܟܠ ܡܠܟܘܬܐ܀

15 ܣܦܪ ܒܝܬ ܟܢܫ ܐܠܐ ܐܬܐ ܠ ܦܫܝܛ:
ܡܢ ܒܪܡܟ ܘܒܟܠ ܓܘ ܘܢܣܦܪ ܐܝܬ܀
ܥܠܐ ܐܦܠܐ ܕܢܪ ܫܟܚ ܐܘ ܡܟܠ ܟ:
ܓ ܚܛܐ ܒܪܐ ܫܡ ܠܐ ܥܒܕܟ܀
ܫܠܝܐ ܒܐܡܪ ܐܦ ܢܘܟ ܐܠܐ ܫܒܥܐ:

20 ܐܟ ܚܟܡܐ ܕܫܪܐ ܣܟ ܕܪܐ ܩܕܫ܀
ܗܐ ܚܙܟܐ ܫܪܐ ܒܫ ܒܟ ܘܐܠ ܫܢܐ:
ܟܐ ܗܢܓܘ ܟܘܩܛ ܐܡ ܗܡ ܫܬ܀
ܫܐ ܚܫܒ ܠܐ ܐܩܟܫ ܓ ܐܢ:
ܫܢܟ ܫܢܐ ܠܘܟ ܘܬܐ ܐܟܫ ܐܡ܀

25 ܓ ܐ ܫܢܐ ܫܒܐ ܒܩܡ ܟܠ ܫܫܟܐ:
ܐܡܪ ܚܟܐ ܐ ܐܟܐ ܩ ܒܐܨܟ܀
ܐ ܩܪܐ ܣܒܪ ܟܘܟ ܡܒ ܫܠܬ:
ܐܨܟ ܗܘܐ ܡܢ ܫܬ ܩܚܡ ܙܐܫܪ܀
ܟܫܬ ܟܫܐ ܐܚܬܩܐ ܓܟ ܫܬ:

for by his generosity the Sustainer has enabled everyone to live.

The Son of God has set the tables, having broken his body,
so that the nations and realms obtain life from him each day.
Behold the enemies: the demons who are opposed to us and surround us—
yet the Messiah has come and lavishly prepared the implements[16] in their presence.[17]
Upon the holy table he has prepared for us his body and his blood,
the implements by which all the demons and devils are defeated.
He has poured on our heads the sweet oil[18] of baptism,
anointing us so that its fragrance may drive the evil one away from us.
By the oil he has made us siblings[19] of his Only-Begotten,
so that we may call out with him to his Father, "Our Father, who art in heaven."[20]
He has mixed for us a living cup with his blood; let us get drunk from it,
and by drinking it forget all the traumas of (our) infidelity.
He has mixed for us and intoxicated us with his living wine, whose taste is sweet,
making us forget all the stings of the great serpent.

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[16] 'Implements' or 'weaponry' or 'provisions;' the term (*zayno*) may refer to weapons, but also to furnishings or provisions, deriving from a root commonly used for sustenance (e.g. 'Sustainer,' line 30). Here the poet-homilist uses wordplay to evoke both table and battle preparations, inspired by the imagery of Psalm 23:5 ('he has prepared a table before me in the presence of my enemies…'). The term occurs again in line 36.

[17] 'In their presence' or 'against them;' once again, the poet-homilist exploits the ambiguity of a phrase, highlighting the militant connotations one may find in the description of the table preparations of Psalm 23:5.

[18] See Psalm 23:5. Anointing with oil is an important component of baptism in the Eastern church.

[19] See John 1:12; 15:15.

[20] See Matthew 6:9.

30 ⲙⲡⲉϫⲁⲓ ⲛⲁⲓ ⲛⲉⲙⲁ ⲥⲉⲛⲁⲩ ⲙⲙⲟⲥ ⲙⲡⲉⲕⲣⲁⲛ⸗
ⲥⲉ ⲁⲕⲱⲱⲡ ⲛⲁⲓ ⲛⲓⲙ ⲉⲧⲁⲩⲱⲡ ⲉⲣⲟⲓ ⲉⲣⲱⲟⲩ:
ⲙⲡⲣⲣⲟ ⲙⲡⲉϫⲱⲱⲧ ⲛⲧⲙⲛⲧⲣⲣⲟ ⲙⲡⲉⲥⲛⲁ ⲥⲉⲛⲁⲩ⸗
901 ⲁⲓ ⲥⲛⲁϩⲟⲩⲧ ⲉⲃⲁⲗ ⲛϩⲏⲧⲟⲩ ⲛⲧⲉⲣⲉⲙⲛⲧⲣⲟ ⲙⲙⲟⲩ:
ⲱⲁⲁⲓ ⲛⲣⲱⲙⲉ ⲛⲁⲓ ⲉⲧⲙⲙⲁⲩ ⲉⲣⲟⲥ ⲛⲁⲓ ⲛⲟⲩⲱ⸗
35 ⲙⲛ ⲧⲙⲛⲧⲣⲣⲟ ⲛⲧⲙⲛⲧⲥⲱⲧⲡ ⲛⲁⲓ ⲉⲣⲱⲟⲩ ⲛⲧⲉⲣⲟⲥ:
ⲛⲁⲓ ⲛⲉⲙⲟⲩ ⲉⲧⲙⲙⲁⲩ ⲉⲃⲁⲗ ⲛⲁⲓ ⲛⲥⲁ ⲡⲉⲕⲣⲁⲛ⸗
ⲡⲣⲱ ⲙⲛ ⲛⲓⲙ ⲉⲧⲙⲙⲁⲩ ⲙⲛⲧⲣⲙⲛⲧⲉⲣⲙⲏⲛⲉⲩⲉ:
ⲛⲉⲙⲁ ⲛⲁⲓ ⲛⲧⲉⲣⲟⲥ ⲛⲓⲙ ⲉⲧⲙⲙⲁⲩ ⲉⲣⲟⲥ⸗
ⲧⲣⲙⲛⲧⲣⲣⲟ ⲙⲡⲉⲕⲣⲁⲛ ⲛⲧⲁⲩⲱⲡ ⲛⲁⲓ ⲛⲥⲁ ⲡⲉⲕⲣⲁⲛ:
40 ⲉⲡⲉⲓⲱⲧ ⲙⲡⲉⲕⲣⲁⲛ ⲛⲧⲁⲓⲟⲩⲱⲛⲓⲁ ⲛⲁⲓ ⲛⲉⲙⲁ ⲙⲙⲟⲥ⸗
ⲙⲙⲁ ⲛⲁⲓ ⲙⲡⲉⲕⲣⲁⲛ ⲙⲛⲧⲣⲱ ⲙⲡⲉⲕⲣⲁⲛ:
ⲉⲡⲉⲓⲱⲧ ⲙⲙⲁⲩ ⲉⲣⲟⲥ ⲛⲓⲙ ⲉⲧⲙⲙⲁⲩ ⲉⲃⲁⲗ⸗
ⲙⲛⲧⲣⲱ ⲛⲁⲁⲩ ⲙⲡⲉⲕⲣⲁⲛ ⲛⲁⲓ ⲛⲥⲁ ⲡⲉⲕⲣⲁⲛ:
ⲉⲡⲉⲓⲱⲧ ⲁⲓ ⲙⲁ ⲙⲡⲉⲕⲣⲁⲛ ⲙⲙⲁⲩ ⲛⲁⲓ ⲛⲥⲁ⸗

The Son of the Virgin mixed a cup for us on Golgotha,
intoxicating us with it—and now we are kissing his crucifixion!
The new living wine, that is fragrant and sweet to taste,
the world has drunk, and look—it has become intoxicated with his love and gulps it down greedily!
The dragon stung Adam and he was dead,
but the Son of God mixed a cup and gave it to us to drink.
Adam drank from the wine of the crucifixion,
and the bile[21] of the serpent that had slain him was quenched by it.

The Grace[22] that fashioned Adam from the beginning
sent down the Son of God to be with him.
It perceived that (Adam) was thrown down, having to embrace the dust in the depths of Sheol,
and it had pity on him like a wet nurse for a baby.
Grace, as a mother would do, mercifully
persuaded the Father to send his Only-Begotten.
So his Father sent him out of his lofty habitations above,
and the heir[23] came down to renew the tattered image.
Grace and mercy were with us from God,[24]
and we were liberated from the judgments (against us) so that we might live well.
Let us thank the Lord because he has grazed us and fattened us
in lush meadows: the scriptures that are full of life each day.

[21] 'Bile' or 'gall;' there may be a further allusion to Matthew 27:34.
[22] See Psalm 23:6.
[23] See Matthew 21:37.
[24] See Psalm 23:6.

45 ܕܐ ܒܚܕܐ ܕܟ ܐܡܪ ܠܐ ܫܡܥ ܠܗ ܐܠܗܐ׃
ܒܐܪܥܐ ܗܟ ܐܢܐ ܐܬܚܙܝ ܠܡܨܪܝܢ ܐܠܗ̈ܐ ܘ
ܕܐܡܪ ܕܐܢ ܫܠܝܚ ܒܚܨܝܪ ܐܠܗ̈ܐ ܐܚܪ̈ܢ׃
ܐܠܐ ܕܟܬܒ ܐܢܐ ܒܐ ܠܗ ܕܐܢ ܒܐ ܐܬ ܗܘ ܘ
ܐܝ ܐܬܡ ܒܥܐ ܠܡܫܡܥ ܒܩܠܝ ܐܦ ܗܟ׃
50 ܐܡܪ ܡܪܝ ܡܫܐ ܕܐ ܒܟܬܒ ܐܬ ܗܟ ܘ
ܒܐܠܐ ܐܡ ܗܘ ܕܐ ܕܐܢ ܒܪܨܦܐ׃
ܒܚܕ ܐܡ ܐܢ ܐܬ ܒܢܝ ܒܢ ܐܡ ܒܐ ܘ
ܐ ܕܡܫܐ ܒܟܬܒ ܠܡܫܡܥ ܒܩܠܝ ܐܦ ܗܟ׃
902 ܐ ܐܡ ܐܡ ܐܬ ܕܐ ܐ ܐܬ ܐ ܘ
55 ܡܐ ܒܫܢ ܐܦ ܕܐ ܐ ܕܐ ܒܐ ܒܢ׃
ܡܦ ܒܟ ܐ ܐ ܐ ܐ ܐ ܐ ܐ ܘ
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60 ܐ ܐ ܐ ܐ ܐ ܐ ܐ ׃
ܐ ܐ ܐ ܐ ܐ ܐ ܐ ܘ
ܐ ܐ ܐ ܐ ܐ ׃

And he has led us by the still waters[25] of baptism,
just as the godly David was asking him to do.
He has turned our souls[26] from the stumbling blocks of dead images,
and he leads us in the way of truth to his Father's house.[27]
Since he has set us in lush meadows, let us graze on them,
for the one who grazes on them will live and find tranquility.

Bread and provisions should be superfluous,
since food from God is deposited for us in the scriptures.[28]
How fine are those lush meadows, how fine!
How delightful are the still waters to those who imbibe them!
The wolf has no means of entering the lush meadows,
nor do the robber or the thief,[29] for (God) has shone his light upon them.
There is living food in the scriptures for the one who desires it,
and king David calls them "lush meadows."[30]
In the world's meadows are thorns and a thicket of briars and bad waters,
for the great serpent has belched forth there, defiling them.
The serpent's bile defiled the meadows, so that whoever grazes
there dies, because the food in those places is rotten.
But if the Word of Life gets mingled with the diseased bread,
(the bread's) taste becomes sweet and death flees from those who eat it.

[25] See Psalm 23:2.

[26] 'Turn our souls away' or 'Restore our souls.' The expression may have either meaning in this context (see Psalm 23:3).

[27] See Psalm 23:6.

[28] See Matthew 4:4 (Deuteronomy 8:3).

[29] See John 10:1–18.

[30] See Psalm 23:2.

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Season your meal with the pasturage that is in the scriptures,
for by it the soul feeds and grows fat so that it may live well.
The Lord is the pasturage for those who graze spiritually,
and he makes them dwell[31] in lush meadows, as it is written.[32]
If instruction does not get mixed with (our) bread[33] and water,
the soul is cheated of the profit that would gladden it.

The earth was barren and the waters throughout the whole world were bad,
until Mary poured salt on the springs,[34]
so that the waters were restored and the pasturage became sweet and the flocks grew fat,
and God came in mercy for the sake of humanity and fed us.
Now look—all of creation is illuminated by his teaching
and grazes on his mysteries,[35] taking great pride in him because he is the one preserving it.
Like a flood his gospel has poured out into all the earth,
making pools in arid places so that his flocks may drink.
Indeed, the Word of Life is beloved by the people,

[31] 'Dwell' or 'rest.' The word can have either meaning.

[32] See Psalm 23:2.

[33] 'Bread' or 'food.' The term 'bread' is often used generally to mean 'food' (also in line 100).

[34] See 2 Kings 2:21.

[35] 'Mysteries' or 'symbols.' The term can have either meaning.

85 ܗܝ ܗܘ ܙܚܡ ܒܐܡ ܟܚܠܬܐ ܡܟܣ ܥܙܡܐ:
ܘܗܢ ܐܛܐ ܡܥܡܐ ܢܥܐ ܘܐܡܐ ܥܨܙ:
ܥܙܐ ܫܘ ܙܚܢ ܒܐܡ ܘܙܐ ܙܡܢܐ:
ܡܗ ܥܙܐ ܟܗ ܚܬܝܐ ܘܟܥܐ ܐܝ ܒܠܡ:
ܚܟܡܐ ܡܬܐ ܐ ܬܚܐܐ ܠܐ ܗܡܥܒ:
90 ܟܙܐ ܫܘ ܢܥܐ ܗܝ ܬܐܘܐ ܒܡܢܐ ܟܗ:
ܡܟܪܐ ܐܙܐ ܡܨܥܡ ܬܐ ܘܚܟܐ ܩܗ:
ܕܒܐ ܘܥܙܡ ܢܡܥܒ ܗܟܐ ܟܠ ܬܨܩܗ:
ܒܘܗܡ ܬܐ ܒܗܡ ܙܐ ܡܗܡܒ ܚܐ:
ܒܘܐ ܕܙܡܐ ܟܐ ܟܙܐ ܘܚ ܐܟܗ:
95 ܡܐ ܢܬܡܐ ܕܙܡܐ ܩܟܗ ܗܝ ܬܗܟܗ:
904 ܡܙܐ ܕܘܒܘܫ ܒܡܙܡܐ ܗ ܡܬ ܟܗ:
ܒܐܡ ܫܥܩܐ ܡܟܙܐ ܗܟܒ ܟܘܙ ܩܟܗ:
ܡܗܒܐ ܠܟܩ ܗ ܙܡܬ ܘܐܡ ܚܗ:
ܡܐ ܨܩܗ ܬܟܒ ܨܐ ܟܚܢܬܥ:

100 more so than bread, and more than water or fine wine.
And the preaching of his glory is dearly loved at the table,
more so than milk and more than honey[36] to them who desire it.
The world rejoices in his teaching as in wine.
Blessed is he who gave us lush meadows in which to dwell![37]

The End of Homily 6 on Praise at Table

[36] See Exodus 3:8, 17; Jeremiah 11:5; 32:22; Ezekiel 20:6.
[37] 'dwell' or 'rest' (the word can have either meaning).

100 ܠܘ ܡܢ ܟܣܦܐ ܐܠܘ ܡܢ ܫܢܝ ܐܣܬܪܐ ܠܘܚܐ܀
ܐܫܬܐܪܐ ܒܫܒܬܐ ܗܐ ܡܠܐܟܟ ܟܠ ܩܕܐܘܗ:
ܠܘ ܡܢ ܣܟܘܐ ܐܠܘ ܡܢ ܒܚܐ ܟܒܘܣܡ ܟܐ܀
ܐܟܫܐܟܩܗ ܘܐ ܟܘܟܐ ܐܡ ܒܟܣܐ:
ܟܙܡ ܒܘ ܒܗܐ ܟܐ ܫܬܟܐ ܒܫܐܐ ܒܟܐ ܥܐ܀
ܟܡ ܫܐܐ ܒܐܐ: ܒܟܠ ܐܟܫܐ ܒܩܕܐܘ.

HOMILY 145: ON PRAISE AT TABLE 7—MODERATION AND CONTENTMENT

Arise, O Instruction,[1] and mix for us your wine, whose taste is sweet,
for it is very pleasing to those who seek to drink of it!
The soul has found nothing to enjoy in the wine that comes from grapes,
but give it some of your stock to drink, and it will be satisfied by it.
We are full of bread[2] yet hungry for you, O Instruction!
Let our hearts find joy in your superb flavors.
The body gets heavy with foodstuffs and the soul grows dim,
but from conversation with you about your concerns there is light and good life.[3]
Food does not give people life,
so come, and let us take our spiritual refreshment in the Word of the Lord!
We should eat bread because nature requires what belongs to it,
but we should not love overeating, since it is unnatural.
Indeed, the will is master over the meal;
being in charge, it may increase or decrease the quantity as much as it likes.
If (the will) allows (human) nature a little, it will suffice, for it;
but if it gives it more, it will take that as well.
Simply eating does not fulfill (the need of) a person's own nature,[4]
and if they add more or are greedy, that is of their own doing.

[1] Jacob personifies Instruction or Teaching, as an actor in the liturgy or a guest at the table.

[2] 'Bread' or 'food.' The term 'bread' is often used generally to mean 'food' (also in line 11).

[3] 'Life' or 'salvation.' The term can have either meaning in this context (also in line 9).

[4] I.e. the needs of humanity are more profound than can be satisfied by food. Ambiguities in lines 15–18 make the rendering here uncertain.

B 145

ⲱⲙⲁ ⲟⲩⲙⲛⲏⲩ ⲛⲁⲓ ⲛⲧⲉⲣⲉ ⲡⲥⲁⲣⲝ

ⲙⲡⲁⲓⲛⲁ .ⲙⲙⲏ.

ⲙⲛⲏⲧⲟⲩ: ⲁⲩⲱ ⲁⲛⲟⲕⲥⲁⲩⲟⲩ ⲟⲩⲱⲟⲩ.

904 1 ⲡⲉⲙ ⲡⲉⲧⲟⲩⲟ ⲙⲫⲏⲣⲓ ⲉⲛ ⲡⲉⲛⲏⲣ ⲛⲓⲁⲗ ⲛⲁⲙⲏⲓ:
ⲙⲡⲉⲛⲕⲁⲗⲉⲓ ⲛⲁⲓⲁⲗ ⲟⲩⲟ ⲛⲉⲛⲁ ⲡⲓⲟⲩⲟ⳿
ⲡⲉⲛⲏⲣ ⲛⲁⲓ ⲛⲁⲣⲟⲥ ⲛⲁⲛⲟⲩ ⲙⲡⲓⲙ ⲙⲁ ⲛⲁⲁⲩⲉ:
ⲡⲓⲙ ⲉⲡⲉ ⲛⲓⲙ ⲉⲧⲉ ⲡⲉⲙⲁ ⲁⲡⲟⲩⲟ ⲡⲓⲟⲩⲟ⳿

905 5 ⲙⲙⲟⲛ ⲛⲥⲱⲙ ⲁⲡⲉⲛ ⲟⲩⲱⲛⲉ ⲁⲩ ⲡⲁⲧⲟⲩⲁ:
ⲛⲥⲁ ⲛⲧⲉ ⲛⲉⲙⲟⲩⲱⲓⲛ ⲙⲡⲁⲣⲭⲏ⳿
ⲡⲓⲙ ⲡⲁⲣⲉⲛⲟⲩⲁ ⲙⲡⲉ ⲛⲉⲛⲁ ⲁⲩⲱⲟⲩ ⲛⲁⲙⲁ:
ⲁⲡⲓⲙ ⲛⲥⲱⲟⲩ ⲛⲁⲛⲟⲩ ⲡⲁⲁⲩⲁ ⲁⲛⲧⲁ ⲟⲩⲱ⳿
ⲛⲉ ⲡⲁⲣⲉⲛⲟⲩⲁ ⲁⲩⲱ ⲛⲁⲧⲁ ⲛⲉⲛⲧⲁⲙⲁⲙⲁ:

10 ⲙⲡⲉⲛⲁⲓ ⲁⲩⲱ ⲛⲁⲛⲟⲩ ⲁⲩ ⲛⲁⲣⲙⲁⲣⲧⲩⲣⲟⲥ⳿
ⲛⲁⲣⲭⲱⲛ ⲛⲓⲙ ⲁⲩⲱ ⲛⲁⲛⲟⲩ ⲁⲛⲟⲕ ⲛⲁⲛⲏⲓ:
ⲟⲩ ⲛⲁⲓ ⲛⲁⲙⲁ ⲁⲡⲉⲛⲕⲁⲗⲉⲓ ⲁⲩⲱ ⲁⲛⲟⲩ ⲙⲙⲟ⳿
ⲁⲛⲟⲩ ⲛⲓⲙ ⲛⲁⲁⲩ ⲙⲡⲉⲛⲟⲩⲱⲓⲛⲓ ⲛⲁⲓ ⲡⲁⲣⲉⲛⲟⲩⲁ:
ⲁⲛⲟⲩ ⲁⲩⲱ ⲛⲁⲛⲏⲓ ⲙⲡⲣⲟⲥ ⲁⲩ ⲫⲁⲛⲟⲩ⳿

15 ⲡⲓ ⲉⲛⲟⲩ ⲛⲁⲓ ⲙⲡⲉⲧⲟⲩⲁⲁⲩ ⲡⲉⲛⲏⲓ:
ⲡⲓ ⲙⲙⲟⲓ ⲉⲡⲉ ⲛⲁⲣⲭⲱⲛ ⲙⲡⲁⲣⲭⲏ ⲛⲁⲓ⳿
ⲡⲁⲛⲁⲧⲟⲗⲏ ⲙⲙⲟ ⲉⲡⲉ ⲛⲉⲛⲟⲩ ⲙⲡⲁⲓ ⲛⲁⲛⲏⲓ:
ⲁⲩⲱ ⲙⲙⲟⲓ ⲁⲩ ⲡⲁⲣⲉ ⲡⲓ ⲛⲁⲛⲏⲓ⳿

Surely, the will governs the senses,
for it has both the capacity of self-discipline and of overindulgence.
Thus it may be natural for someone to drink wine,
but getting drunk on it and losing one's mind is a matter of the will.
A slack habit is a tight-fitting shackle on them who possess it,
subjugating them so that they fall from a state of freedom.
Then they perpetrate unseemly excesses,
especially those related to large quantities of food.
By appetites the mind grows dim in its understanding,
but the thinking of one who withdraws from food receives enlightenment.
People who eat too much have dragged the soul down to the level of the body;
but they who diminish the body excite it into becoming spirit.
The body is a slave and it will be subservient to you to the extent that you wish it,
but if you indulge it with excess, it will revolt against you.
Habit demands that you not give (the body) bad habits,
otherwise it will grow strong and refuse to listen to you when you call to it.
Set limits for it with respect to its eating and drinking;
without limits you will never build habits for (the body).

If a profusion of nice things are arranged upon the table,
take just enough food to satisfy your hunger, nothing more.
If you discern[5] glorious food[6] on the table,

[5] The translation follows several manuscripts that have 'discern' (*tephrush*); Bedjan's edition follows the reading 'repay' (*tephrū*). The two Syriac words are similar in appearance.

[6] Literally, 'food of glory' (compare line 43, 'habit of glory').

ܗܘ ܕܚܝܠܐ ܡܢ ܟܠ ܥܡܐ ܚܙܝܢ ܐܢܫܝ ܕܝܢ
ܒܪ ܡܠܟ ܗܘ ܘܐܡܪ ܠܗܘܢ ܫܡܥܘ ܐܠܗܐ ܀ 20
ܐܠܗ ܐܒܗܬܢ ܐܢܐ ܟܚܫܬ ܘܬܗܝ ܫܪܝܐ ܠܝ
ܗܘ ܕܚܝܠܐ ܕܡܫܬܠܚ ܒܟܠ ܐܬܪ ܐܫܕܪ ܐܢܐ ܀
ܘܐܦ ܐܢܐ ܐܡܪ ܠܟ ܕܬܬܦܣ ܡܢ ܥܡ ܐܠܗܟ ܗܘ
ܕܐܝܬ ܠܟ ܐܦ ܠܐ ܐܚܕ ܡܢ ܐܚܝܟ ܐܠܐ ܀
ܘܐܢ ܐܡܪ ܐܢܬ ܒܠܒܟ ܠܡܐ ܐܫܬܟܚ ܐܢܬ ܠܝ ܀ 25
ܐܠܗ ܐܒܗܬܟ ܗܘ ܕܐܦ ܐܢܐ ܐܫܬܟܚ ܠܟ
ܐܠܗ ܐܒܗܬܟ ܗܘ ܕܐܦ ܐܢܐ ܐܫܬܟܚ ܠܟ ܀
ܘܐܢ ܐܡܪ ܐܢܬ ܒܠܒܟ ܠܡܐ ܐܫܬܟܚ ܐܢܬ ܠܝ 906
ܐܠܗ ܐܒܗܬܟ ܗܘ ܕܐܦ ܐܢܐ ܐܫܬܟܚ ܐܢܬ ܠܟ ܀
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ܘܐܢ ܐܡܪ ܐܢܬ ܒܠܒܟ ܠܡܐ ܐܫܬܟܚ ܐܢܬ ܠܝ
ܐܠܗ ܐܒܗܬܟ ܗܘ ܕܐܦ ܐܢܐ ܐܫܬܟܚ ܐܢܬ ܠܟ ܀ 30
ܘܐܢ ܐܡܪ ܐܢܬ ܒܠܒܟ ܠܡܐ ܐܫܬܟܚ ܐܢܬ ܠܝ
ܐܠܗ ܐܒܗܬܟ ܗܘ ܕܐܦ ܐܢܐ ܐܫܬܟܚ ܐܢܬ ܠܟ ܀
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ܘܐܢ ܐܡܪ ܐܢܬ ܒܠܒܟ ܠܡܐ ܐܫܬܟܚ ܐܢܬ ܠܝ
ܐܠܗ ܐܒܗܬܟ ܗܘ ܕܐܦ ܐܢܐ ܐܫܬܟܚ ܐܢܬ ܠܟ ܀ 35
ܘܐܢ ܐܡܪ ܐܢܬ ܒܠܒܟ ܠܡܐ ܐܫܬܟܚ ܐܢܬ ܠܝ
ܐܠܗ ܐܒܗܬܟ ܗܘ ܕܐܦ ܐܢܐ ܐܫܬܟܚ ܐܢܬ ܠܟ ܀

when you are no longer hungry, leave it and do not come back to it.
Even if it spoils, it is better for it to spoil while you abstain,
than for you to succumb to the disgusting practice of gluttony.
Do not spoil a habit of glory and freedom,
by being worried that the food not spoil.
Once you have eaten it, it all gets reduced to excrement,
and it utterly spoils, for the belly does not keep it fresh.[7]
You are virtuous if you do not push in to get more;
you are wise if you reject slack habits;
you are noble if you give to your stomach in a limited way.
Beware that you do not damage your virtues.
When you become worried that the food may be ruined,
beware that you do not ruin those virtues you have in abundance.

(Human) nature is gold, and it has within it as many virtues as required;
require it to hate gluttony, for that is not virtuous!
When the provisions are brought in to you, beware that you do not begin
tasting to see whether they are savory or bland.
The love of the Lord will be sitting before you on the table,
and someone discerning has seasoned your morsels of food with it.
If there be love when the provisions are bland,

[7] Literally, 'does not keep fair things.' The root meaning 'fair, lovely, virtuous,' and 'virtue' occurs repeatedly in lines 46–54 (also line 81).

40 ھا ولا ڪهنه آوسه هنه ٥لا آمءه ڪه٭
آق آحبا قمس آاڪب ڀ وَسه آيه:
٥آيه لا آقلا ڪاهٴلاا وهڪ هسا٭
لا آهڀ آيه حبا وغهحسا ٥وسآوءاا:
ڀ ٹڑق آيه ڪلا هاقهحلا وه٭ لا آاڪب
45 ها وَاهحلاه ٥ه حلاوصلا غنا ڪنه:
ه٥اڪب آحبا لا ڪسه نهزا ڀنها غهه٭ا
آيه عقسه آيه آلا آسهر ڪلا ٹلاا:
907 آيه ٹقسم آيه ٦ ڪحبا وقنا آهلا٭
آيه وَا آيه ٦ ڀهغهسلا حڀنها آلا:
50 ٹه لا آهءه ٥هڪ وَڪ عقتاا٭
ڀ ٥ا آاٹر ڪلا هاقهحلا ولا آامٹلا:
ٹه لا امٹلا ٥هڪ غهه٭ا وهڪلاً ڪ
حبا وَ٥ها ٥ه ٥هما وهمامڪ آسه هه غهه٭ا:
امڪسه٥ ٹهتا اهٴلاا ولا عقسا٭
55 ٹه لا امزا ها وٹالڪ ڪ هسڪتاا:
٥آ٥ا٥ا هلآهم ٦ا هڪتبه آه ققته٭
ٹه٥ه وهنا ٥ه٥ا هسم ڪ ڪلا ڤهوا:
٥ه٥ ڤزه٥ا هڀ٥ آس ڪلهنقبر٭
٦ آسه ٹه٥ا ها وققته هسڪتاا:

it seasons them, for indeed (love) is salt to the discerning.
If some kind of food is brought to you that is salty and unpleasant,
add love to it and it will amend it into a delicacy.
Do not be preoccupied criticizing the food,
but be preoccupied making sure there is love among those sitting at the table.
Do not inspect the earthly wine[8] to see whether it is cloudy,
because cloudy wine does not make clear love murky.[9]
You should remain calm,[10] and be a vessel brimming with tranquility,
and then through you all who are troubled will be made serene because of your tranquility.
Stir up immense praise for a little food,
and through thanksgiving become a discerning person, rather than a gourmand!
An animal will eat as much as you give it, without discernment,
and because it is not satisfied it will not turn down food.
But humans endowed with reason and discernment
know they should cut back on food so they will not get weighed down by it,[11]
and start falling into the disgusting practice of gluttony,
or slipping gradually into greedy overindulgence.
This is why they set limits, both for their eating
and their drinking, having a wise mentality.
Furthermore, all discerning people will season their provisions

[8] Literally, 'wine that comes from vines.'

[9] Or, 'does not trouble clear love.' The term used repeatedly in lines 65–68 can mean 'troubled,' in an emotional or interpersonal sense, but it may also mean 'cloudy, murky.'

[10] The term used twice in lines 67–68 has several meanings: 'calm, serene, pure, clear, sincere.' The poet uses this term repeatedly here due to its multiple literal and metaphorical connotations.

[11] The translation follows the reading of some manuscripts (*bōh* rather than Bedjan's *leh*).

60 ⁘ ⁘ ⁘

with praise, thanksgiving, and blessings.

Fair is the adoration that goes up from the table,
and the Word of Life also, when it is sung at the meal,
so that those who dine will not forget who it is that gave them
these fine things, along with the presents that are arranged for them!
Instead, may the Lord be acclaimed with praise and thanksgiving,
because he has multiplied all sorts of delights and arranged them on our table!
They who dine are obliged to give praise as tribute
to their Lord, who has let them take their fill of the good things belonging to him.
And if they will not offer praise, out of justice he will repay them with scourgings
for what they cheated out of him[12] when they ate without giving thanks.
So we should make repayment before we are struck by justice;
we should render praise so that we will not be scourged by the judge!
The mouth that accepts provisions, taking them in and storing them up,
should bring forth adulation, offering it in repayment for the meal.

[12] The translation follows several manuscripts that have 'cheated (out of him)' (*ṭlam*); Bedjan's edition follows the reading 'tasted' (*ṭ'em*). The two Syriac words are similar in appearance.

ꠇꠛ ꠉꠝꠣꠡ ꠣꠤꠉꠞ ꠛꠣꠞꠤꠞ ꠣꠤꠉꠞ꠆ 80
ꠤꠇꠞ ꠤꠣꠞꠛꠡ ꠝꠣꠞꠣ ꠡꠣꠇꠞ ꠞꠣ ꠉꠝꠣꠡꠣ꠆
ꠣꠇꠣꠞꠛꠣ ꠡꠣꠞꠛꠣ ꠞꠣ ꠉꠝꠣꠡ ꠣꠤꠉꠞ꠆
ꠛꠣꠞꠛꠣ ꠡꠣꠞꠛꠣ ꠞꠣ ꠉꠝꠣꠡ ꠣꠤꠉꠞ꠆
ꠉꠝꠣꠡ ꠣꠤꠉꠞ ꠞꠣ ꠛꠣꠞꠛꠣ ꠣꠤꠉꠞ꠆
ꠛꠣꠞꠛꠣ ꠣꠤꠉꠞ ꠞꠣ ꠉꠝꠣꠡ ꠣꠤꠉꠞ꠆ 85
ꠛꠣꠞꠛꠣ ꠣꠤꠉꠞ ꠞꠣ ꠉꠝꠣꠡ ꠣꠤꠉꠞ꠆
ꠛꠣꠞꠛꠣ ꠣꠤꠉꠞ ꠞꠣ ꠉꠝꠣꠡ ꠣꠤꠉꠞ꠆
ꠛꠣꠞꠛꠣ ꠣꠤꠉꠞ ꠞꠣ ꠉꠝꠣꠡ ꠣꠤꠉꠞ꠆
ꠛꠣꠞꠛꠣ ꠣꠤꠉꠞ ꠞꠣ ꠉꠝꠣꠡ ꠣꠤꠉꠞ꠆ 909
ꠛꠣꠞꠛꠣ ꠣꠤꠉꠞ ꠞꠣ ꠉꠝꠣꠡ ꠣꠤꠉꠞ꠆
ꠛꠣꠞꠛꠣ ꠣꠤꠉꠞ ꠞꠣ ꠉꠝꠣꠡ ꠣꠤꠉꠞ꠆ 90
ꠛꠣꠞꠛꠣ ꠣꠤꠉꠞ ꠞꠣ ꠉꠝꠣꠡ ꠣꠤꠉꠞ꠆
ꠛꠣꠞꠛꠣ ꠣꠤꠉꠞ ꠞꠣ ꠉꠝꠣꠡ ꠣꠤꠉꠞ꠆
ꠛꠣꠞꠛꠣ ꠣꠤꠉꠞ ꠞꠣ ꠉꠝꠣꠡ ꠣꠤꠉꠞ꠆
ꠛꠣꠞꠛꠣ ꠣꠤꠉꠞ ꠞꠣ ꠉꠝꠣꠡ ꠣꠤꠉꠞ꠆
ꠛꠣꠞꠛꠣ ꠣꠤꠉꠞ ꠞꠣ ꠉꠝꠣꠡ ꠣꠤꠉꠞ꠆

To you be praise, Lord, who feeds wicked servants,
and even when they cheat you, fulfills their needs every day![13]
To you be thanksgiving, for you do not look for remuneration;
instead, the realms fill up on the good things belonging to you,
without having to pay.
May all mouths be moved to adore you,
in great wonder and loud voices! Praise be to you!

The End of Homily 7 on Praise at Table

[13] See Matthew 5:45.

95 ܟܡ ܐܡܫܝܚܐ ܗܢܐ ܘܐܠ ܟܬܒܐ ܩܛܠ:
ܘܒ ܠܡܢ ܟܗ ܡܠܐ ܩܝܡ ܫܘܒܥܬܐ ❖
ܟܡ ܐܘܣܒܐ ܒܟܫܘܝܟܐ ܠܐ ܫܐܢ ܐܝܟ:
ܐܠܐ ܡܝ ܗܝܢ ܟܬܒܐ ܡ ܠܬܒܪ ❖
ܟܡ ܬܐܪܣ ܩܝܡ ܩܕܡܐ ܟܡܡܟܗ:
100 ܟܐܘܐ ܙܐ ܩܠܐ ܙܗܐ ܟܡ ܐܡܫܝܚܐ ❖
ܟܡ ܡܐܡܢܐ ܡܨܝܟܐ: ܘܟܠ ܐܡܫܝܚܐ ܒܩܕܘܐ.

HOMILY 146: ON PRAISE AT TABLE 8—GRATITUDE

O you who are seated to dine at this table piled up with nice things,
attend to this poor man,[1] and hear the teaching brimming with life!
The lot has fallen to me to be the spiritual cupbearer,
so take and imbibe the Word of Life, brimming with light!
I see the cupbearers busying themselves with the (drink) service,
and love has motivated me to mix spiritual wine.
Earthly wine,[2] make way for our superior wine,
from which the wearied soul drinks, forgetting its hurts!
O ministers of physical things, make way for me,
for I have been moved to stand up and minister spiritually.
You arranged the bread,[3] polished the cup, and mixed the wine,
but the soul has gained no profit from your preparations.
The body has been satisfied, having gorged itself on delectable things;
now let the soul take refreshment from the teaching.
The Head of the House[4] has appointed me over the ministry of the soul:
it is famished and complains against me for not having ministered to it!
Please let me return to the soul what belongs to it,
some of the divine instruction on which it can grow fat.

[1] Christian ascetic authors commonly employ self-deprecating language.

[2] Literally, 'wine that comes from vines.'

[3] 'Bread' or 'food.' The term 'bread' is often used generally to mean 'food.'

[4] Possibly the Lord God; or the head of the house in which the meal is taking place.

B 146

ܘܡܢ ܐܝܟ ܕܐܬܝ ܠܗ ܠܒܪ ܡܢ ܒܝܬ ܐܒܘܗ ܘܐܡܗ ܘܢܬܟܢܫ ܒܐܪܥܐ ܕܐܒܘܗ ܘܐܡܗ ܘܢܗܘܐ ܥܡ ܢܫܐ ܐܚܪܢܝܬܐ ܘܢܫܬܟܚ ܠܗ ܐܝܟ ܕܐܬܬ ܠܗ ܠܒܪ ܡܢ ܒܝܬ

O you who are seated to dine, give thanks lavishly for the food,
for among the discerning there is no receiving without thanksgiving.
As for people who are short of discernment, even when they eat mountains of honey, they never feel obliged to give thanks.
But as for people suffused with discernment—just giving them a piece of bread induces them powerfully to be thankful.
When the congregation[5] of the people[6] were eating sweet manna,
and the wind was dropping quail onto their table for them;[7]
when a pillar of fire had been set up for them as a lamp,[8]
and they were being sheltered by clouds, luxuriating, and overflowing with fair things;
when all sorts of fine blessings were coming to them from all sides,
they were faithless, they complained, and they continued to blaspheme against their Sustainer.[9]
All the forces of nature had been turned into ministers for them,
so that even the height and the depth became slaves, subject and obedient:
the height put forth manna for them, and the depth quail;
the bread was delightful and the meat fresh, that they might grow strong by it.

[5] The translation follows the reading of several manuscripts, having 'the congregation-of the people' (construct state), rather than the text Bedjan edited, 'the congregation, the people' or Bedjan's conjectural correction.

[6] The expression 'the congregation of the people' refers to the Israelites (see also line 71).

[7] See Exodus 16:4–35.

[8] See Exodus 13:21–22.

[9] See Exodus 16:2; Numbers 14:2.

ܐ ܒܗܡܡܝ ܐܘܒ ܡܟ ܠܐ ܡܐܦܠܐ:
ܒܠܒ ܦܬܘܡܐ ܠܐ ܡܠܛܗܐ ܒܠܐ ܐܘܒܠܐ: 20
ܐܢܐ ܒܛܡ ܡܟ ܦܘܥܐ ܐܒܐ ܒܐܠ:
ܢܬܐ ܒܒܐ ܒܛܐ ܡܠܒܘܡ ܠܐ ܡܠܚܠ
ܕܐܢܐ ܒܒܠܐ ܦܢܘܡܐ ܐ ܐܠܐ ܟܐ:
ܟܡܐ ܡܣܡܐ ܐܠܐܡ ܒܟܠ ܟܠ ܐܘܒܠܐ
ܦܠܡܐ ܟܐ ܐܠܐ ܒܟ ܐܠܐ ܐܘܒ ܟܠ ܡܟܠ: 25
ܟ ܥܒܐ ܟܐ ܒܘܐ ܡܠܡ ܠܠ ܦܢܒܐ
ܟ ܟܢܐܒ ܒܛܐ ܡܡ ܐܡ ܟܡܢܒ:
ܟ ܟܡܐ ܡܡܠܒ ܡܟܠ ܠܡ ܡܠܡ
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Yet even after all this, they repaid the Lord
with insult, complaining, and blasphemy instead of the thanksgiving that they owed.
Insult to the Lord, and ugly words to Moses;
instead of utter praises—utter blasphemies out of (their) stupidity.

Then Justice, like a schoolmaster brandishing the rod,
rightly kindled punishments against the wrongdoers.
He invited and summoned snakes[10] that eat dust,[11]
yet do not complain against the provider of that food.
It was as though these words were being spoken by Justice
to the wrongdoers, who kept complaining against their Sustainer:
"Wrongdoers, consider that the snake eats dust and is silent,
without blaspheming, without grumbling, without complaining,
so that it may eat the food[12] the Lord wished to give it,
accepting it as a delicacy, silently and without protesting.
But you Hebrews, look—the manna is spread and the quail set out,
yet you complain against the provider of these excellent things."
Because of this, by means of dust-eating snakes,
Justice chastised those who had eaten manna and complained.
It whipped them with lashes soaked in bitterness,
since they had eaten sweet manna[13] yet not offered praise.

[10] See Numbers 21:4–9; 1 Corinthians 10:9–10.

[11] See Genesis 3:14.

[12] Literally, 'bread,' a term commonly used to mean food in general.

[13] The translation follows several manuscripts that have 'sweet' (*ḥalyō*); Bedjan's text purports to follow one manuscript (B) with, 'manna in the wilderness.'

35 ܗܘܒܐ ܗܘ ܕܐܡܪ ܠܗ ܐܝܟ ܕܐܡܪ ܠܝ ܐܢܐ ܗܘ ܕܐܡܪ ܠܗ ܐܝܟ ܕܐܡܪ ܠܝ ܐܢܐ
ܗܘ ܕܐܡܪ ܠܗ ܐܝܟ ܕܐܡܪ ܠܝ ܐܢܐ

There was upright judgment in that chastisement,
for the snakes hissed at the people in order to bite[14] them,
and the people were struck with severe bites,
since they had bitten the manna and quail, yet kept complaining.
And if the Mystery had not restrained the snakes by means of the snake,[15]
they would have annihilated the people entirely due to their complaining.
Now all these things that happened and have passed away with their times,
became a lesson for later people and for those in-between,
so that no one would complain about the food given to them,
but rather be thankful and give praise to their Sustainer.
For what does the Sustainer require of people,
or ask of them, except that they recognize who is feeding them?
So now, when you eat some of the fine things
of the Lord, give thanks so you will not be scourged like the Hebrews.

Now the Children of the Bride,[16] the Daughter of Lights are not like
she who forged the calf[17] and kept complaining against her Sustainer.
The congregation fiercely hated the Father in the desert,
for if they had not hated him, they would not have exchanged him for the calf.
When people hate, they hate even the gift of their adversary,
and even the very nice things he does for them are not appreciated.

[14] 'Bite' or 'sting.' The word can have either or both meanings in this context.

[15] I.e. the bronze snake; see Numbers 21:9.

[16] I.e. the Christians of the Church.

[17] See Exodus 32.

ܐܗܐ ܐܟ ܒܢ ܐܙܪ ܗܘ ܐܙܒܐ: 55
ܐܬܬܐ ܪܙܝ ܗܘ ܚܛܐ ܟܚܛܐ ܒ
ܐܚܬܒܐ ܐܙܬܐ ܟܢ ܗܐ ܚܛ:
ܒܚܛܒ ܗܐ ܐܝܢ ܐܗܟܐ ܐܙܒ ܗ 913
ܐܟ ܒܐܐ ܠ ܛܐ ܚܡܐ ܟܬܐ:
ܗܟ ܒܚ ܗ ܐ ܚ ܟܗ ܚܛ ܐ ܒ 60
ܐ ܟ ܒ ܐ ܒ ܐ ܚ ܐ ܚ ܒ ܐ ܚ ܐ ܒ ܐ ܚ ܐ ܒ ܐ ܚ ܐ

Since they hated the Father, they rejected his fair (gifts),
and they kept complaining about the things he sent to them.
Because they hated him, they also crucified his Son when he came to them,
and they did not even want him to heal them, though they were sick.
O Lord, the Daughter of the Peoples[18] loves your Father and you, the One and Only,
and desires to repay all your blessings with thanksgiving!
To you be praise from the table piled with nice things,
and from the vessels whose drinkers shout for joy to you!
Thanksgiving be to you, by whom the bread of afflictions[19] has been blessed,
so that from it the bread of holiness might go into all the world.
Praise to you, my Lord, for the wine that stripped Noah naked[20]
you compared figuratively with your blood,[21] so that all the licentious might be covered modestly by it.
From our table may songs of adoration be sung to you;
may every thanksgiving be offered to you from our meal;
from the vessels of wine, may there be veneration for your creative power;
may the steam and incense from our foods (go up) to your divinity.
Through you may everyone who sits to eat at our table receive a blessing;
through you may any who have grown weary receive mercy[22] in our food.
Through you may those who have honored our inadequacy be honored,
from you may those who have served our poverty be made rich.

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[18] I.e. the Church of the Christians. Early Syriac writers often use 'peoples' (also, 'nations, Gentiles') to mean the Christians.

[19] Some manuscripts have 'bread of the just' (*kênê*) rather than 'bread of afflictions' (*kêbe*). The two terms are similar in appearance.

[20] See Genesis 9:21.

[21] See Matthew 26:28.

[22] 'Mercy' or 'absolution.' The term may have either meaning in this context.

75 ەھَلا وَهنُا لَّاحُا لْحصَبا هَصَّتُبْاه:
ەَهنَلهُا ىَەُا كَلا ْحقُبْاُا وَهصَبَوْ كُه۞
ەكَلا وَهنُبْاه ەْهصَبا كَحتْه صَبا ْاُبْاُا كُه:
ەلُا حُسُا ىَەُبا اُهلُا وتَاهسه وَحنَّسُا ىَەُبا۞

914 كَنِبا كَصقْا هُنىِ لَّاصَبِ نُسهُا ەكُب اَّسبُا:

80 ەحلَّەوَّسبُا حُسُا وِاُهنَّەس صَلا لُخُبُب۞
كُب اُهصَّمسُا هْب صُلَّەوُا وَهطُا لُّهتَا:
ەهْب لَّكتْا وَهسَّحصَّب كُب هُلَّەسَّتهْب۞
كُب اَەوَّسبُا وكَسهُا وصَاتْا حُب اُاحَنَبِ:
وتْەوُا هْتْه كَسهُا وهَەوهُا حكُحهُا صَكْه۞

85 كُب هُنىِ هَەحسُا وسَّهنُا وَحتَّەس هَّه صَنهَب ىَەُا:
هلَّحلَّمىِەب كَبهُب وَاتَصْف حه صَلا رَّكتْلُا۞
هْب صُلَّەوْ هُكَّت هَەحسُا تْوَّهنَّەس كُب:
هْب هْاهَّەحلَّ صَلا اَەوَّسبُا اُاهَنَّد كُب۞
هْب لَّكتْا وسَّهنُا هْوِوُا حكُنَّەتهْبُب:

90 هْب هْاقكُبَّ حْهنُا ەصَّنهُا لَّلكُهَّەبُب۞
حُب تْبكَنَّب صَلا هْب وَهصَّسب كَلا صُلَّەوْ:
حُب تْبسَّهْا صَلا هْب وَّللَّ حصَّحكُتْبَّ۞
حُب تْبسَّهْ اَسُا وسَّهْ كَكَّهوَّەبَّ:
هْتُب تْحلَّوْ اَسُا وسَّهْب هْهصَّتَّەبَّ۞

95 You supply nourishment, you give life, you provide sustenance,
and all delightful pleasures come from you. Praise be to you!

The End of Homily 8 on Praise at Table

95 ܐܝܢ ܒܗ ܕܐܢ ܐܝܢ ܒܗ ܒܫܡ ܐܝܢ ܒܗ ܐܠ ܐܝܢ:
ܗܘܐ ܐܢܐ ܠܐ ܬܗܘܝ ܠܟ ܠܡܫܝܚܐ.
ܡܟܝܪ ܡܕܡܢܐ ܒܐܘܣܠ: ܘܟܠ ܠܡܫܝܚܐ ܒܦܐܘܠ.
ܡܟܝܗ

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